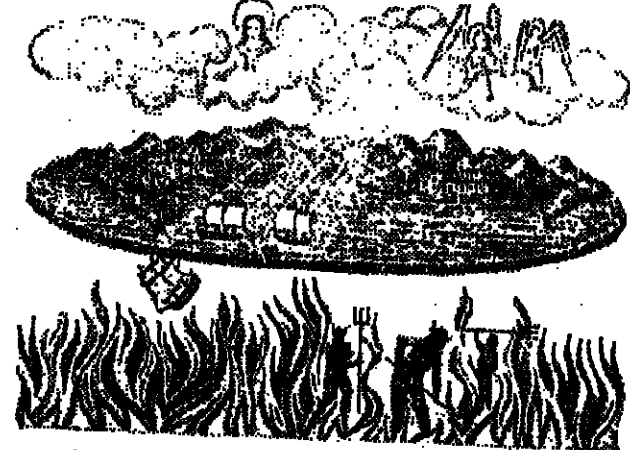


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opened up the sea route to India, and Christopher Columbus discovered San Salvador.

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# The writer and his territory

BY GEOFFREY GRIGSON

WOULDN'T BE DOGMATIC on the advantages a writing man may or must derive, now, from a community he adopts for a while. We are at least to be born somewhere.

One may think together of landscape and this literature of place (which may be verse, fiction or topography). The two have risen together, not *pari passu*, and with the differences proper to different arts, one the youngish parent—or godparent—of the other. Literature of place, prompted first of all by the vision outwards of Northern, especially Flemish painting, has expressed discovery. The first discovery was, simply, that place or region existed. Once that was clear, individual discovery of place was possible to each new individual consciousness.

From Leland, let's say, to a climax in Henry James, place could be expressed, and with increasing subtlety be made expressive. The English and Welsh journeys of John Leland were undertaken for Henry VIII from about 1539 to 1543, resulting in *The Itinerary*, in a book, at any rate a long scatter of notes and observations, which, ordinary and bare as they may seem to us, stated the diversely existing things of England and Wales.

There is almost no other cape, nor bay, haven, creek or peere, river or confluence of rivers, breaches, washes, lakes, mores, fenny waters, mountains, valleys, mores, heathes, forestes, woodes, cities, burges, castelles, principall manor places, monasteries, and colleges, but I have seene them; and noted yn so doing a hole worlde of thinges very memorable.

"A hole worlde of thinges"—it is prototopography by a first English topographer or topographical writer (for "topography" and "topographer" as naturalized words the first dates in the OED are for the one 1549, for the other 1603. The date in French for *topographie* is 1544; for *topographe* 1580, in Montaigne, from whom Florio translated it as "topographer"). Poet in Latin, friend and economist of Sir Thomas

Wynt, and a man of educated peculiarity, true it certainly is that Leland was unable to command a prose adequate to the particulars of his "hole worlde". Nobody has thought of his notes as literature, ancestral to the books of place, to Thoreau's *Walden*, it may be, or William Morris's Icelandic journals; but he responds, he states a vision now and then. For a sample try Leland coming to Bewdley, a place in 1572 miserable, pressurized and shabby enough. Leland crosses over the bridge from the eastern bank of the Severn, about sunrise. He observes a town "set on the syde of an hill so conglyng that a man cannot wische to set a towne better", and he goes on that Bewdley

riseth from Severne banke by est upon the hill by west; so that a man standinge on the hill *trous pointen* by est may descryve almost every house in the towne, and at the ryseynge of the sunne from esle the hole towne alterithe, being all of new buyldinge, as it wof of gold.

It is a beginning: and in the half century or century after Leland the shire surveyors exhibit the young consciousness of surroundings in something more of an expressive way. Richard Carew (another poet friendly, at least as an undergrader, with better poets, and a man of subtle education and strong local affection) exhibits Richard Carew, if without intending to, in his *Survey of Cornwall*. The *Survey*—he was already working on it by 1584—endures as more than of local interest by its fixation and creation of place in a baroque activity of style. One remembers his delight in tidal water flowing into the country between hills and ebbing again into the sea, and in the union of the two streams, the salt and the fresh:

passage, by which means they both undergo Wade bridge, the longest, strongest and fairest that the shire can muster.

Headlands "shoulder" out of the sea, a fishing hamlet "couches" between hills. In passing along Hill Walk, above Fowey harbour, your eyes shall be called away from guiding your feet, to descry by their farthest kenning the vast ocean sprinkled with ships that continually this way trade forth and back to most quarters of the world. Nearer home, they take view of all sized cocks, barges, and fisherboats, hovering on the coast.

Between Carew and Henry James, the James of Dunwich—"almost all you can say of it is that it consists of the mere letters of its old name. The coast, up and down, for miles, has been, for more centuries than I presume to count, gnawed away by the sea. All the grossness of its positive life is now at the bottom of the German Ocean, which moves for ever, like a ruminating beast, an insatiable, indefatigable lip". James of Newmarket—"Nature offers her gentle bosom as a gaming table; card-tables, billiard-tables are but a humble imitation of Newmarket Heath"; the James of Lavender Hill, Battersea, "so many rows of coal-scuttles", of all London in the sound that is "supremely dear to the consistent London-lover—the rumble of the tremendous human will"—between the *Survey of Cornwall* and *English Hours*, *Portraits of Places*, *A Little Tour in France* and *The American Scene*, milieu offered stylistic possibilities of stated contrast and actual discovery, whether far off or round the corner. The few quotations above show the Carew of the 1580s and 1590s and the James of the 1870s and 1880s as belonging—in regard to place at least—to one family of writers, with the difference that Carew's pictures are intermittent in his broad context of

information and Henry James's, in his sketches of place, are extended, amounting to a developed verbal landscape, at a time when painted landscape was approaching its demise.

Contemporary with Monet, Sisley, Whistler, Renoir, Henry James spoke modestly and deprecatingly of his own impressionism; his pieces are "altogether governed by the pictorial spirit"; they are "impressions, immediate, evocative, and consciously limited"; but still like Carew (or Leland even) he discovers, as a rule: his pages "represent a stage of observation on the writer's part which belongs to freshness of acquaintance".

For James, Europe was a perpetual discovery outside America; Stonehenge or Dunwich was a discovery outside London, engagingly alien to drawing rooms or Chelsea or the Reform Club; for James himself one feels it was surprising to be in Moonmoultshire climbing Skirrid Fach and commenting (like Donne not so far away at Montemery Castle) on the size and quality of the primroses, just as for the reader of his *English Hours* it is surprising and engaging to discover the Master on the crawl, "very much in the attitude of Nebuchadnezzar", up a rough hill at the extreme of England, on the confines of Celtic barbarity.

But the conditions of a literature of place are exactly satisfied in his travel books. He discovers what he himself does not know, and what, he assumes, will come more or less fresh, or unobliterated by familiarity, to his reader. Outside society exists another society; outside the solid exists the fresh; outside the complex the more or less simple; outside the existence of now, the seeming presence of then, or of the timeless. For Dorothy Wordsworth—to recall more writers of place—outside the small talk of sociability exists the Quantock Cape of hollies, and hail pattering on the dry leaves, or the lakeland circumstances around a single fox for Cobbett, in his *Travels*.



outside delectable London exists the sudden danger of the Selborne neighbourhood or the smoothness of an extent of down; for the happy egotism of Kipling in his *Journal*, the other thing which matters may be the blue shoulder of Radnorshire mountain along with dog roses; for that sophisticated, neglected writer Cecil Torr human comedy and oddity coexist with the shapes and items of the setting around his small manor house under Dartmoor.

Discovery must recur with each new consciousness. Even then the extended possibilities of place and contrast as a medium, actual or marginal (one need not assent to that depreciation of himself by Henry James, who is inescapably "in" his pictures or impressions, and who did say that the "perception of surface" was "a perception, when fine, perhaps none of the most frequent"), have narrowed greatly, if they are not by now exhausted. For many reasons. A mode is over-popularized and cheapened, and talent recoils from it. What was expressive of writer and milieu weakened long ago to a lax exercise of sensitivity. For instance years and years ago, volumes of such sleekness at a low level made up the *Highways and Byways* volumes of county exploration. I remember when young trying one after another of these books (which might have illustrations in line—superior to the prose—in a late landscape manner by F. L. Griggs or a more impressionist manner by Joseph Pennell, whose drawings were added also to James's *Little Tour in France* and his *English Hours*), and being unable to accept their flow of mild and vague response. No pause, no striking sentence, no phrases bringing fact into the open (such as James's observation up and down the now vanished quays of Nantes of "the bright greenness which is the tone of French landscape art"); also no exactitude of other than conventional and stale information,

only a replaying of old cards from earlier books.

One could see the respectable, well-thought-of Macmillan men of very finely perceptive eyes, and turning up a Kelly's Directory or a Murry's Handbook, or picking and

country house and outside the park, or as between a close polite society and the roughness of all the rest of our society; as between the modern and the primitive, the lonely and the crowded, surely has lessened the conceivable excitement and impact of each new personal discovery of a

able contrast in a homogeneity either urban or suburban. Like stair carpets, paths in the Lake District wear out, as if they were on Hampstead Heath.

Should the literature of, or through, place extend his investigation and interpret more of the

of the neighbouring not too much outside that which we have seen or can see ourselves the trouble.

James, it is true, had places he would never leave. I am writing about Morocco and writing provided him with conceivable utterance about aspects, he not spoil those impressions. But we go everywhere, the terrain, familiar already, in 1888, in his admired Pierre Loti. I have just referred to myself as asking "how far accomplished and practically exclusive" back and feeding on it.

Writer and painter are some influences, but it is to suppose that writing will continue, however, to outlast painted or sculpture. What the painter's milieu is the material of the artist who is and language. So what expect is not the disappearance of place, but effective restriction to its forms. I expect more and more person and place in literature, the use, it is unfamiliar by someone who painter and poet, who change brief book from prose to back again. Or I imagine like notebook adaptation of the Japanese travel-diary of linked prose (of which an example comes by Basho's *Naniwa*).

One may recall a number of the *Architectural Review* which illustrated the same graceless renovation and change stretching, as I remember it, from Bournemouth to Carlisle. The kerbs and pavements of planning officer's suburbanization spread through the dominions of every rural district council, we live more and more without avail-

elsewhere? Give us Mexico or Ethiopian uplands via himself, and himself via the outlandish? He has tried, but even if the arts had not shifted towards abstraction, the place-book, or the place-louche of travel, best—except for imparting the writer—the unfamiliarities, not exactly of the familiar, but at least

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Some may feel that they need not only an introduction to the Brussels set-up, but a refresher about our future partners. In *Community Europe Today*, which has been updated and extended to include Ireland, Denmark and (optimistically) Norway, Roger Broad and R. J. Jarrett have marshalled the essential facts. They include the kinds of things that most people know instinctively—if not very accurately—about their own country: basic constitutional pattern, institutions, relative strengths of the political parties, basic structure of industry, role of the unions. The information is organized not by country—which would have made it stodgy—but thematically. Then the authors go on to provide their own guide to the Community itself, which both know from the inside. It makes less elegant reading than Mr Davidson's account, but is as detailed and exhaustive as anyone can need.

Not the least fascinating aspect of the encounter with the Community will be the continual evolution. Not only laws will want to know what is involved, and B. A. Wortley's compilation seems to be what the layman needs. Much of it is concerned not with detailed comment on Community law but with predicting the practical difficulties that may occur, and advising how to cope with them. There is an interesting chapter on the problems of translating the Rome Treaty, and another that is the ideal of the Community's Court of Justice. Businessmen will find here the gist of what is worth knowing about EEC practice to date. Radio-Canada, had the desired effect. For the first time many English

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## Getting together

IAN DAVIDSON  
*Britain and the Making of Europe*  
150pp. Macdonald. £1.95.

ROGER BROAD and R. J. JARRETT:  
*Community Europe Today*  
255pp. Oswald Wolff. Paperback. £1.50.

B. A. WORTLEY (Editor):  
*An Introduction to the Law of the European Economic Community*  
134pp. Manchester University Press. £2.40.

DAVID SPANIK:  
*Europe. Our Europe*  
193pp. Secker and Warburg. £1.95.

RICHARD MAYNE:  
*The Europeans*  
206pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £2.

With membership of the European Community now a certainty, and likely to be upon us before we realize, many who previously lacked the courage or the interest to take up a book on "Europe" may feel constrained to do so in the months ahead. There is of course no lack of literature on the subject churned out over the years, as the mirage of membership came and went, by the stalwart band of "convinced Europeans". Fortunately, however, this year has brought its own crop of Euro-books, offering at least a fresh rendering of the old themes, and one case a wider and richer introduction to our future partners.

Ian Davidson provides the latest, and on balance the best, of the many guides to the European Community, where it came to be, how it works and how it is headed. With supreme polish and economy, he covers the ground in a minimum of pages, yet leaves out nothing essential. *Britain and the Making of Europe* is probably the best reading on the Brussels-bound train or plane for businessmen or civil servants, who after keeping vaguely informed about the Community for the past decade now need an intelligent introduction to its political, economic and institutional complexities. There is a first-hand quality about the book that can only come from someone who has watched the Community from the touch-line in Brussels, as well as observing it from Paris and London.

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All this is rather serious stuff, nevertheless, for the holiday season. Anyone who continues to find the whole subject of the Community boring, but feels an urge to pick up something with Europe in the title, on condition that it is readable, could turn to *Europe Our Europe*. It is no more and no less than the story of Britain's final, successful bid to get into the Common Market, told by someone who followed it blow by blow. Readers should not be misled by the sub-title ("The Inside Story of the Common Market Negotiations") into expecting revelations and insights of the kind that Nora Heloff provided in 1963 in *Why the General said No*. . . . David Spanik writes, no doubt correctly, as though his reader had not taken in anything at the time, and presents a clear, straightforward account of what happened. We are spared any attempt to interpret, or to fit events into their wider context of either national politics in the Common Market countries, or world events at the time. This is businesslike narrative with just a few anecdotes—plus (in pride of place on the back of the jacket) the menu of the lunch given for President Pompidou at the British Embassy in Paris during the vital meeting with Mr Heath that set the seal on British entry.

*The Europeans* is different—and more ambitious—in scope from all the other volumes under review. Having already written, in the past, some of the most readable books on the Community, Richard Mayne has had the same hunch as Mr Broad and Mr Jarrett: namely that the most important thing for most British people now will not be to understand the Brussels machinery (which they are anyway not too likely to have to deal with directly) but to get to know their new partners.

He brings to the task of helping them his characteristic skill in using a mass of varied—and at times almost ludicrous—detail in illustrating more general points. He is able to write about all the Common Market countries with the same wealth of observed detail that a skilful novelist will use to set the scene in his own country, and adds to this a broad

knowledge of the languages of the area. *The Europeans* must be one of the rare books where the index makes fascinating and absorbing reading: "Tell Murebul, temperature of the earth. Tenda hunting grounds. 'Teutonic' people, Thackeray. William Makepeace. Thames river. Thirty Years' War. *This Way Please*, Thompson. James. Times. The. tools. Torralba. Toto. . . ."

The centrepiece of *The Europeans* is a long chapter called "Rogues' Gallery", in which Mr Mayne has gathered together what their fellow-Europeans thought of, in turn, the British, French, Italians and Germans—and in particular what they had to say against them. This is less ambitious than Salvador de Madariaga's tour de force, *Portrait of Europe*—to which Mr Mayne pays a slightly critical tribute—in portraying national characters and how they interact. But it enables Mr Mayne to let others speak for him, which he does with humour as well as skill.

The visions of contemporary filmmakers and the snide comments of nineteenth-century travellers follow closely on those of our pair girls and anonymous friends. The result is a mosaic of slander, half-truths, perceptive insights, and clichés—some more, some less, correct—about the eating habits, sexual prowess, dress and intellect of the peoples of the four countries concerned, plus an occasional dose of Mr Mayne's own sharp judgment on how things are today.

He follows this up with a few pages on Europe's new "Cosmopolitans", and a burst of historical fireworks on the hallowed theme of a European identity, concluding—not surprisingly—that

what differentiates us, in fact, is less our supposed "national character" than the social and economic context that works so deeply on our original clay; and since in the present world all European countries have shrunk to a modest size in a modest continent, we are all much more alike than we think.

This is reassuring news as we prepare for the day that will formalize, irrevocably, our ties with our fellow-Europeans.

John Saywell's short book, which brings together, with a minimum of linking narrative, a valuable collection of letters, communications, editorials and political cartoons, shows the FLQ kidnappers and the assassins of Pierre Laporte to have been surprisingly successful in realizing their intentions. True, they failed to discredit or invalidate the three governments involved—Ottawa, Quebec and Montreal. Federal Premier Trudeau emerges almost unscathed from the charges that he over-reacted or that he dictated Provincial Premier Robert Bourassa.

The thirty-six-year-old Prime Minister of Quebec, in office only since the previous May, forced by unknown and unseen opponents to respond to an ultimatum containing a long list of unrealistic demands and to unite his cabinet behind him before he replied, excites sympathy rather than criticism. In all fairness, Laporte's death cannot be blamed on Mr Bourassa's procrastination, nor can Ottawa or Quebec really be held responsible for the clumsy application of the War Measures Act.

However, the most important of the FLQ's demands to be conceded (important because of its impact), the broadcasting of its manifesto by Radio-Canada, had the desired effect. For the first time many English

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This is reassuring news as we prepare for the day that will formalize, irrevocably, our ties with our fellow-Europeans.

John Saywell's short book, which brings together, with a minimum of linking narrative, a valuable collection of letters, communications, editorials and political cartoons, shows the FLQ kidnappers and the assassins of Pierre Laporte to have been surprisingly successful in realizing their intentions. True, they failed to discredit or invalidate the three governments involved—Ottawa, Quebec and Montreal. Federal Premier Trudeau emerges almost unscathed from the charges that he over-reacted or that he dictated Provincial Premier Robert Bourassa.

The thirty-six-year-old Prime Minister of Quebec, in office only since the previous May, forced by unknown and unseen opponents to respond to an ultimatum containing a long list of unrealistic demands and to unite his cabinet behind him before he replied, excites sympathy rather than criticism. In all fairness, Laporte's death cannot be blamed on Mr Bourassa's procrastination, nor can Ottawa or Quebec really be held responsible for the clumsy application of the War Measures Act.

However, the most important of the FLQ's demands to be conceded (important because of its impact), the broadcasting of its manifesto by Radio-Canada, had the desired effect. For the first time many English

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He has two antennae,  
They search back and forth,  
Left and right, up and down.

He has four feet,  
He is exploring what I write now.

This is a living being,  
Is this a living poem?

His life is a quarter of an inch.  
I could crack him any moment now.

Now I see he has two more feet,  
Almost too delicate to examine.

He is still sitting on this paper,  
An inch away from An.

Does he know who I am,  
Does he know the importance of man?

He does not know or sense me,  
His antennae are still sensing.

I wonder if he knows it is June,  
The world in its sensual height?

How absurd to think  
That he never thought of Plato.

He is satisfied to sit on this paper,  
For some reason he has not flown away.

Small creature, gnat on my paper,  
Too slight to be given a thought,

I salute you as the evanescent,  
I play with you in my depth.

What, still here? Still evanescent?  
You are my truth, that vanishes.

Now I put down this paper,  
He has flown into the infinite.  
He could not say it.

RICHARD EBERHART

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The *Tenets of Wickedness* (1959), which anticipated *Women's Lib* by nearly a decade, the situations inside a man caught in adultery as a result of killing himself under a street lamp and burning himself bright as all the way down one side of his eye and body, and a case of a Dr. Jekyll-and-Mr. Hyde split persona who is both the Raffles-like detective and the Holmes-like detective, are trying to outwit the other. The two twist and turn, and the narrative shifts and turns, as if it were back again, but it has nothing of the novel's dizzying and dizzying sense of parody that covers *Melville*, Faulkner, Thurber, Fitzgerald, Pound, Joyce, Kafka and many other nineteenth and twentieth-century masters. . . . Not only are the scenes dead-accurate, but their sense in the novel is always in

then, while the smile is still on her father's face, Lolita goes down with double pneumonia and dies. At this point the book takes on tragedy and comedy. Don Underwood grows up, survives some ridiculously embarrassing courtships, is like many a young fictional hero like Julien Sorel seeks ways of achieving the sophistication he dimly senses on the horizon. The possibility of marriage threatens to trap him in provincial origins, but when he realizes that his girl-friend feels the way he realizes that perhaps there have enough in common after all, we deduce to be not entirely out of the question. A mild case of tuberculosis allows a timely escape to a

The subsequent novels are mostly concerned with charting the snags and reefs of modern married life. What *Into Your Tent I'll Creep* says to us "the sexual frustration is the lot of civilized man". Life is cruel in the novels since *The Blood of the Lamb*, but it is the cruelty of

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That is what I wanted to do. Think  
of you. Tracing your beauty in the  
press."

Edward, you're a poet."

"I'd rather be a painter: the Master  
of Ann Wakefield."

"You're romantic."

"Romantic? Woman, I'm in love with  
I'm in love with you. you stupid  
in the same conversation. we  
this exchange:

Harry's son seems to have been quite real; Sophia's husband's foray into a mistress and a light aircraft into war-torn Africa seems to be complete fantasy; other events and relationships are painted by both in various shades of truth. The only other inhabitant of the island, a fisherman called Yórgo, had kept a photograph of his lost soldier son pinned up in his hut. The son, never in fact lost at all, but a particularly brutal guerrilla, turns up at the end of the book, murders the old man for his savings, and disappears again. The foggy point about illusion and reality is not very subtly underlined.

The pretension of the matter is exactly matched by the inflated style: straining after significance, it constantly lands itself with high-sounding phrases that seem to yield up no meaning at all.

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same grain as its other pieces, and intimately involved with them, human, animal, vegetable and topographical. This may not seem much to big-nation neighbours, but it's the thing I have and the thing I want. I believe those whose first language is Welsh have it still more than I do. In a small country which is also a small community, life for better rather than worse is strongly compacted. In those parts of Wales where I have spent most of my life, in the Valleys and on Cardigan Bay, people are unmistakably themselves and yet limbs one of the other, so that in human terms you live a life of great riches there. In small communities you are a full sharer. You belong.

### Aspirations of nationalism

This, very properly, makes it hard to turn your back on nation-family issues. If you are Welsh and live in Wales and feel you want some say in its present and future, there are questions you must answer in your heart though you dodge them in the market-place. The political question is to what extent Wales should be free; the linguistic what should be done for or about the Welsh language; and we are now hearing more and more the socio-literary one, for whom should a Welsh writer write? The consensus of opinion on all three is more sympathetic to Welsh national aspirations and the language than it was ten years ago, and altogether more so than it was in the 1930s. Most who have thought about it at all judge it proper that the Welsh people should have the fullest possible say in managing their own affairs and not find their interests subsumed elsewhere. But the ballot box confirms that the cry for complete freedom and divorce from England, with a Berlin Wall down Offa's Dyke and gunboats on the Severn, comes from a minuscule minority, while Home Rule or independence without customs, tariffs, defence and a foreign policy, would benefit Plaid Cymru less than the Labour Party. Even so Labour doesn't want it, and no more do the Tories, so it's a likely bet we won't get it. For one reason or another, political dissatisfactions will help charge Welsh literary batteries for a long time to come.

This syndrome of malaise—not having what you want, not knowing whether you will get it, and not being sure you will not be worse off if you do—exerts a heavy spell on Welsh-language writers. It has given them strength, purpose and identity, stress, harassment and neuroses. It is unlikely that a body of authors exists anywhere in the world with a stronger sense of responsibility towards their medium. They know that it is up to them and no one else whether the language survives among men or is dustily housed in the corridors of academic research.

Just as they know that if the language perishes, the unique essence of Welshness (they say Welshness itself) will disappear from the face of the earth. One need not be a Welsh speaker or even a Welshman to see that the loss of the Welsh tongue would be a soul-shaking disaster for Welsh-language Wales and its 600,000 speakers; an immediate impoverishment of English-language Wales, for Welsh Wales is a bank on which we others draw emotional, spiritual, and I would like to think intellectual cheques every day of our lives; while in a perfect world the loss of a native British tongue would be a matter of concern to all who prize the variety and quality of mankind in the rest of Great Britain.

But the world is not perfect. The rest of Great Britain (or more accurately, the United Kingdom), every corner of it, has troubles of its own, and only Welshmen owe their language a living. Its roots reach down through the human history of these Islands; its noble and distinctive written literature has a life-span of eleven centuries or more, and shows undiminished vitality today. It is also the language in which men and women speak to each other of love, hope, pity, triumph and despair. It is the language of their family affections, religious and political beliefs, trades, crafts, customs, pleasures, and the myriad indispensable exchanges of common life. Here are the words of a Welsh dramatist, Tom Richards: "I think in dialogue. I talk to myself. . . . When I thought of people talking, they were talking in Welsh." And of a Welsh novelist, Islwyn Ffowc Elis:

It may appear that I had a choice [of languages], but to me there was none. I was in love with Wales and her language, and convinced that it was my destiny to write for her and in that language. . . . It is in this language that I find the most meaningful words—many of them untranslatable words which percolate the life of my ancestors now submerged by the waters of time.

And true it is, few men choose their language of creation. The language chooses them.

So for Welsh-language writers the fight for survival is on. To an extent unparalleled in England they are politicians, impelled by nostalgia for time past, dissatisfaction with time present, and distrust of time to come. Their position is not a comfortable one. Writer after writer confesses to "the agonizing crisis of the language"; the deeply Christian Gwyneth Jones is not the only poet to feel that carrying the language is like carrying the cross; the deeply Christian Saunders Lewis not the only publicist to believe that one should

not join a movement, even to save a nation or its language, in simple expectation of its success. The commitment is to the cause. "[The language issue] is the only political question deserving of a Welshman's attention at the present time." Which lets you out of a lot and in for a lot simultaneously.

From this burden of devotion, obsession, idealism, claustrophobia, vision or blindness—the Welsh language issue has been called all these, and better, and worse—the Welsh writer in English, if he so wishes, is free. He may be tempted to express guilt, or failing that, regret, but if he does, will do so in English. That there is a substantial Welsh literature in English reflects the hard fact that a substantial majority of the people of Wales do not speak Welsh, and that a great many more are not sufficiently at home in it to make it the language in which they write creatively. Thirty years ago, and as I think truly, I defined Anglo-Welsh literature (the term is descriptive, admittedly less than perfect, but too useful to be discarded) as "the rendering inarticulate of that majority of Welshmen who cannot, do not, and will not make Welsh their first language". I think this will remain true even if the efforts of Plaid Cymru (the Welsh Nationalist Party), Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (the Welsh Language Society), to say nothing of the Urdd or Welsh League of Youth, bring about a fully bilingual situation in Wales. Under bilingualism Welsh-language writers will still find themselves carrying their cross on a road no less stony.

### Welsh Welsh and Anglo-Welsh

We come now to a cruel paradox. Ask all save a fistful of readers outside the Celtic nations who are the worthwhile Welsh writers of yesterday and today, and they will confidently name Dylan Thomas, Vernon Watkins, David Jones and R. S. Thomas in poetry; Emyr Williams in drama; Rhys Davies and Glyn Jones in the short story; and maybe Richard Hughes, Gwyn Thomas and Richard Llewellyn in the novel. Which shows that the green in their eye matches the green in our valley. For to true dancers before the linguistic ark these are hardly less removed from the Tiber-nacle than the Red Lady of Paviland in the Ice Age or a Caernarvon-Invested Prince of Wales in the Age of Protest. The names they celebrate are, of one generation, Saunders Lewis, Gwyneth Jones, Williams Parry, Waldo Williams, Kate Roberts, D. J. Williams and John Gwyn Jones, and, of another, J. Gwyn Griffiths, Peniarth Davies, Bobi Jones, Islwyn Ffowc Elis, Euros Bowen and T. Glynne Davies. Which points the paradox. Welsh-language authors have a small,

warm, loving, personal audience. English-language authors can, and sometimes do, reach an audience vast, varied and profitable. There are inevitably native thinkers in whose eyes profit and fame outside Wales come from whoring after those three well-lined bristly-biblical bitches, Babylon, Baal and Aholibab; but this is to take a naive view of a complicated linguistic and moral situation. We are chosen by our intentions, and while the rewards (I do not mean only the financial ones) of writing in a world language are many, the compensations of authorship in a small-nation language are not few.

For whom does a Welshman write? As nowadays presented, it is almost a theological question, and the answer with salvation in it is, For Wales and the Welsh. This obviously is a context where no Welsh-language author can go wrong. There is nowhere and nobody else for whom he can write; and indeed he can write for less than a quarter of those. But for Anglo-Welsh authors the question is more loaded. A fair number of those post-1950 poets who are the backbone of *Poetry Wales* and *The Anglo-Welsh Review* could say in good conscience that they address themselves to Wales, and if the English want to listen they are welcome. I am thinking of men like Harri Webb, John Trapp, Leslie Norris and Meic Stephens. This reflects the unmistakable shift in national feeling in Wales today, just as their resort to publishers resident in Wales reflects the practice of Welsh-language publishing, where London and New York are as nothing alongside Denbigh or Llandysul. The weight of Welsh Arts Council grants to both literatures (roughly £200,000 over the past five years, including the periodicals) and the modest cash aid given by the Welsh Books Council to Welsh-language authors "in lieu of the royalties which many of them could not hope to receive", are between them putting authorship in Wales and for Wales on the reasonably viable commercial footing it has never before enjoyed. The bases of patronage and each particular act of patronage are properly the subject of debate, but the need for patronage in Wales has long been acute, and the desire that it should now come from Welsh not English sources is just about unanimous.

Fortunately, high principles and good intentions are not the whole of the story. There remains the question of questions for literature: How good is it? I look along my shelves and tap an affectionate finger on *In Parenthesis*, *A Ray of Darkness*, *The Love Man*, *Poetry for Supper*, *China Boy*, *Deaths and Entrances*, *The Water Tree*, *My People*, *In the Green Trench*, *The Dark Daughters*, *A High Wind in*

*Jamaica*. For whom are these written? Out of what impulse? What purpose? When published, and by whom among the best of Anglo-Welsh, and among those of them who have turned homeward to Wales, the second wave of Welsh, but it may well be their necks. Every count for an author counts must be the value, shaped and shaped alive in the minds of the writer engaged in an audience cast much more closely related, were resisted in many quarters in the middle of the century. Even Edward Frankland, who in the estimation of many

is something about chemistry, even now persuades many of us that the fact is worth a pound of theoretical speculation. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that the concepts of atomism and valency—has, I suspect, some of the linkage of atoms—audience cast much more closely related, were resisted in many quarters in the middle of the century. Even Edward Frankland, who in the estimation of many

text comprises a systematic account of the death, decay, disintegration and eventual fate of members of major marine animal groups, with excellent drawings of hard parts and of stages between death and final deposition on the bottom; all at once the rotting bundle of feathers and bones floating with the garbage by the quay becomes an object of great interest, to be carefully studied and drawn. Which fishes float, and which sink? What hard parts are likely to be detached first? What are the conditions under which something as soft as a jellyfish can leave an impression? The author makes it clear that many more observations and experiments are needed before such questions can be answered satisfactorily.

The second large section of the book deals with palaeontology, or the study of traces of the activities of animals. The most obvious traces are those resulting from locomotion, but a record can be left of such activities as moulting, tooth-shedding, reproduction, defecation and feeding. The detail in this section and the wealth of references are impressive (although there is the curious omission of the highly characteristic coprolites of elasmobranch fishes). The final chapters of the book discuss animal communities in the context of their non-living environment (biocoenoses), the relationship between a "fossilized" biocoenosis and what the palaeontologist discovers as a biofossil, and the application of definitions of biocoenosis and biofossils to Heligoland Bay.

This has clearly been a most difficult book to translate, requiring a battery of anatomical and other terms for members of many animal phyla. One regrets such slips as "neoceranium" for neurocranium (twice), some misspellings, words left out, some rather uncommon common names (Neumari shark for Porbeagle), and some outmoded scientific names. Nevertheless, the text flows smoothly and Irmgard Oertel deserves full credit for producing this very readable version.

## Atoms in combination

A. RUSSELL:  
*History of Valency*  
D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1969. Pp. 1,100. £10.00.

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## North Sea fossils

HELM SCHAFFER:  
*Geology and Palaeogeology of the North Sea*  
Edited by G. Y. Craig.  
D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1969. Pp. 1,100. £10.00.

text comprises a systematic account of the death, decay, disintegration and eventual fate of members of major marine animal groups, with excellent drawings of hard parts and of stages between death and final deposition on the bottom; all at once the rotting bundle of feathers and bones floating with the garbage by the quay becomes an object of great interest, to be carefully studied and drawn. Which fishes float, and which sink? What hard parts are likely to be detached first? What are the conditions under which something as soft as a jellyfish can leave an impression? The author makes it clear that many more observations and experiments are needed before such questions can be answered satisfactorily.

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where research and advanced teaching were effectively combined. A taste for rationalizing the results of experiment spread outward from Germany, rather than from England or France, in mid-century, and it was from such centres as Liebig's that the electrochemical scheme of Berzelius first became widely known. Although he had a debt of inspiration to Berzelius, Berzelius was actively opposed by several French chemists, including Dumas.

C. A. Russell explains how theories of valency were able to grow in such unpromising soil. He underlines the importance of isomerism within organic chemistry: a molecular formula alone could scarcely give an adequate description of an organic molecule, so long as palpably different substances could share a formula. From theories of simple radicals, and of "types" and polyatomic radicals, Dr Russell passes on to consider how carbon, the one kind of atom common to all organic compounds, at length came under

close scrutiny, especially by Frankland, Kekulé and Couper. The eventual appreciation of the tetrahedral nature of carbon was not only a turning-point in the history of chemistry, but in due course had repercussions in all the physical sciences.

In a book with its own tetrads arrangement of seventeen chapters, it would be difficult to single out one more enjoyable than the rest. But the section at the end of the first part, on "the question of priority", is especially entertaining, not for the restrained and gentlemanly mud-slinging on which it reports, but because a number of old disputes are there resolved through an explanation of the way in which the different parties so often had different motives and ambitions, started from different basic assumptions, and used different languages to express what were nevertheless related ideas. Was Frankland's variation of saturation capacity, for example, the same as

variable valency? In analysing the meaning of such terms, not only do disputes over priority tend to dissolve, but it becomes possible to explore larger and more engrossing historical issues.

At the risk of some crudity in abstracting a theme from a necessarily complex book, one must mention the recurrent idea that despite the flirtations of the physical chemists with thermodynamics, organic chemistry was time and again driven back to more elementary and yet more fundamental considerations of structure, and hence of valency. At the very end, with the arrival of the quantum theories and molecular orbitals, the affair with physics becomes more than a flirtation. Here the book is somewhat lacking in the attention to detail which characterizes the earlier chapters; and yet, despite the tame ending, from the point of view of structure and clearly there are few histories of chemistry that compare favourably with Dr Russell's timely monograph.

## The academicians of Florence

W. E. KNOWLES MIDDLETON:  
*The Experimenters*  
A Study of the Accademia del Cimento  
414pp. Johns Hopkins Press (1969). £10.70.

The Accademia del Cimento—the "Academy of Experiment"—was founded in Florence in 1657, fifteen years after the death of Galileo. When it expired, ten years later, it left its mark on experimental science in the form of a solitary publication, *Saggi di naturali esperienze* (1667). This guide to a selection of the experiments made under the auspices of the Academy has since gone into nearly a score of editions, and W. E. Knowles Middleton's translation, the first into English since Richard Waller's of 1684, occupies in every sense a central place in *The Experimenters*. Dr Middleton makes excellent use of Tozzetti's edition of 1780, which quoted extensively from the previously unpublished papers of the Academy. But the new English version is graced by other valuable material. It has introductory chapters on the Academy's protector, Leopoldo Medici, his brother the Grand Duke Ferdinand II of Tuscany, the Academicians themselves, and their modus operandi. The translation is followed by a sketch of the unpublished work, and accounts of the Academy's dissolution as well as of its transalpine connexions. There are not many unexamined leaves in this particular olive grove of academe.

The experiments described in the *Saggi* are systematically arranged, covering phenomena from most branches of elementary physics, and especially phenomena relating to air pressure. Most of the work is

presented in a surprisingly modern way, but the image of the dædal scientist in Joseph Wright's "A Philosopher Shewing an Experiment on the Air Pump" of a century later accords well with those passages of the *Saggi* in which are described the details of goldfinches, fish, and reptiles. This was a time when it seemed that any such observation might at length prove to be of significance, a time when, for that matter, Fellows of our own Royal Society could in all sobriety pronounce John Cole's body, 161 years after his death, to be "of an ironish taste".

By comparison, the style of the *Saggi* as a whole is restrained and formal. The aim was to scuttle Aristotelianism, or, as Dr Middleton has it, "the authoritarian pseudo-science of the schools". This was best done discreetly. The safest way of reporting experimental work was to use an astringent and analytical style which would make its authors appear indifferent to the peripatetic view, while they covertly hoped for its downfall.

That Florentine science was in a finely balanced religious position after the indictment of Galileo perhaps explains why we are left with a feeling that the Academy was unusually self-sufficient, not to say isolated. Boyle certainly impressed its members, although his influence on the work described in the *Saggi* was minimal. Bacon's influence was nonexistent. On the other hand, the Academy in its turn had little influence on Northern European thought, and Muschenbroek's translation of the *Saggi* into Latin, not published until 1731, is hardly a notable landmark in the history of science.

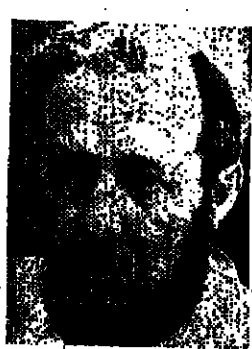
The *Experimenters*, like Dr Middleton's histories of the thermo-

meter, barometer, and meteorological instruments generally, is a thorough piece of writing, which at once becomes the standard introduction in English to the published record of the ten Academicians over their ten years of work together. It introduces, without answering, a question of great historical interest: why, with the publication of the *Saggi*, did Tuscan science falter and pass into relative obscurity? But it takes us one stage nearer to an answer, providing as it does much useful information not only on patronage, but on what was done with patronage—which is more to the point.

*Alchemists and Gold* by Jacques Sadoul (translated by Olga Stevick). 284pp. Neville Spearman, £3.15) is a purported demonstration of the truth of alchemy which is thought sufficient "to convince the most sceptical"; this is not an overly historical book, although most of the evidence adduced is from the distant past. Scepticism is attacked on four main fronts: by the repeated imputation of unwisdom to the Scientific Establishment; by an insistence on the principle that direct initiation by a Master is essential, and academic study insufficient; by making several more or less veiled references to those who have made fortunes from the Royal Art; and by quoting the words of the great, from Hermes Trismegistus to Frederick Soddy, Nobel Laureate. The writer attains a moderately good level of sophistry. When the ground is shaky, he retreats to the misty religious peaks of the Great Work. However secret the Art, there has never been a shortage of writers anxious to divulge the secret to the world at large.

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Intelligible, the type of regional speech used in their native area. Englishmen are unaware that British speakers of English are in a minority anyway, and perhaps even less aware that speakers of a standard form of the language are in a minority of British English speakers.

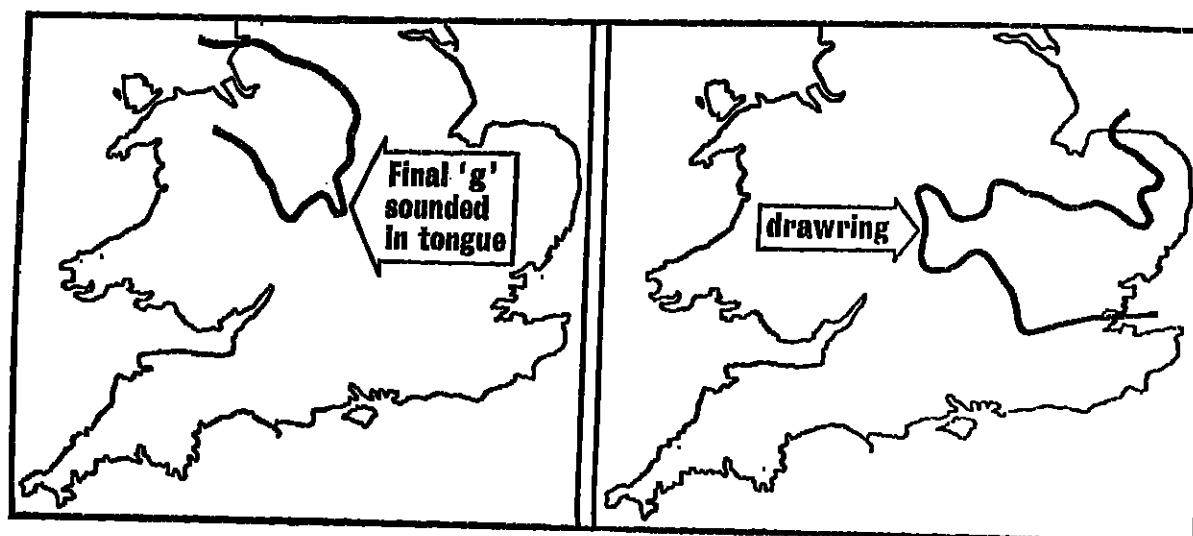
The assessment of our own speech is not always easy. People often find themselves very "broad" (having a pronounced local accent) when they hear their own voices played back from a tape-recorder. If we listen carefully to ourselves through the earpiece of our own telephone we can often detect pronunciations that are somewhat unexpected. W. Labov, writing of the speech of New York, suggests that lower-middle-class people believe that they themselves speak a "better" kind of language than others around them who proved on examination to be more or less identical. Observation suggests that this attitude is also true in England.

In a discussion of linguistic regionalism we have to exclude those speakers whose register belongs to the group of standard English speakers—a very small group, in fact, of "RP" speakers (Received Pronunciation: the technical linguist's term for educated English—see David Abercrombie's *Studies in Phonetics and Linguistics*). But many of those who have become RP speakers after first learning to speak (and there are a great number) often betray their regional origins by only one or two rarely used features that they have not eradicated. The sounding of a final *g* in *longue*, for example, betrays a North-West Midland origin (see maps), as does a medial *g* in a word like *slings*.

Perhaps one of the easiest markers for the identification of regional speech is the pronunciation of words like *pass*, *laugh*, *bath* with the short *a*. This original sound that was once used throughout the country has altered in both quality and length in the greater part of the south of England, roughly south of a line from the Wash to the Cheshire-Shropshire border with Wales. A very small area of south-east Lancashire bordering on Yorkshire and Derbyshire has partaken of the lengthened form. In the Midlands one passes from the long to the short variety on a journey from Huntingdon to Peterborough.

A similar readily identifiable marker is the vowel sound in *put*, which in the South of England differs from *putt*. In the North Midlands and North the words rhyme, and the vowel sound used is the one in *put*, good, bull.

Pronunciation is the easiest way for anyone to identify a regional speaker and perhaps the next easiest to observe, though more difficult to



Maps showing distribution of variant pronunciations.

describe, is the variant use of *r*, from the vulgar "French" sound in Northumberland and North Durham (though not Tyneside) to the distinctive "West Country" *r*, that begins in mid-Hampshire going west and becomes strongest perhaps in Gloucestershire and Devon. Lancashire has its own *r* sound of a different type; another is that heard in the West Midlands and typified by the rustic performers in the radio soap opera *The Archers*. All of these *r* sounds are heard in a position following a vowel and before a consonant where an *r* still appears in the spelling, words like *turn*, *work*, *hard*. The RP pronunciation in these words includes no *r* sound. In areas where such an *r* is still pronounced it may have an effect upon a preceding vowel, as in Northumberland, where *turn* becomes "torn", or in the West Country on a following consonant particularly if it is *n*, *d*, *t*, or *l*.

Further description of regional difference becomes more practicable when we use a phonetic script in writing. Oral performance can also be contrasted by intonation ("tune") which is so very distinctively different from RP in Suffolk, Newcastle or Liverpool, for example.

Social conditioning has brought about the modern attitude to an accent. The school system in state primary and secondary schools is geared all the time to portraying only one desirable form of the language and other varieties as being inferior. Perhaps fortunately the centuries of assertion that provincial English is "bad" have not by any means had a destructive effect on regional speech. The truth probably is that most of us use some regional forms.

One of the results of the attitude towards local dialects has been that local writing has been virtually strangled. The introduction of a system of orthography based on the London

pattern of English meant that provincial writing, prolific before 1450 (for example *Gawain*), ceased to appear.

Nineteenth and twentieth-century writers have increasingly introduced dialectal forms for some characters. Hardy and D. H. Lawrence are probably the best examples of this, with Burns and Burns perhaps the best-known poets writing in vernacular style. Burns hardly counts in an examination of English dialect writing since his work has a special appeal with overtones of nationalism for Scots. His work is much more widely known than any English poet because of the nationalist appeal. Modern works such as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and the film *Kes* seem to typify the new acceptance of regional speech and the way in which it is becoming an "in" thing, along with other forms of revolt against a traditional Establishment attitude. These may be symptoms of a lasting movement or they might be overtaken by some other fashion in entertainment.

The nineteenth century produced a great deal of writing in local dialect of no literary worth whatsoever but which is interesting as evidence of the emergence of the newly literate lower classes as readers in the industrial North. Particularly in Lancashire and Yorkshire with the writings of Tim Bobbin and John Hartley there began a tradition of local writers trying to use a vernacular form of the language. The struggle to represent a phonetic realization of local pronunciation in orthographic form is one that provoked considerable local support. The *Clark Almanac* published from Halifax and Bradford in the latter part of the nineteenth century is perhaps the best known, though many scores of others existed. Mostly these annual publications were filled with trite and lugubrious tales with occasional excursions into verse.

From these writings began a series of conventions in an attempt to reproduce local speech. Most noticeable is perhaps the definite article "t' bottom" for the Yorkshire Pennine and Lancashire variety. Unfortunately the accuracy of interpretation of the pronunciation is still limited by the knowledge of the reader and his ability to have heard correctly, if he has ever had experience of this kind of speech. The actual sound indicated by the *t* in "t' bottom" may be so glottalized that an unsophisticated interpreter would hear no occurrence of the article. This would result in an interpreter—an actor for example—being very inaccurate in his rendering for the Northern listener. On the other hand, there is one rather restricted area in Yorkshire, the Holderness district, where the definite article is not sounded at all.

As in the fourteenth century, the Western and Northern parts of England are still most outlandish in speech. Societies have fairly recently been formed to promote interest in local speech, customs and lore and the Society of Somerset Folk, the Yorkshire Dialect Society, Lancashire Dialect Society and Lakeland Dialect Society are typical examples of this. Encouraged by such societies and their publications, local writing continues to flourish within the limits of the audience who are prepared to make the effort to read it. Writers like the late Stanley Unwin, a North Riding poet, achieved considerable success with variant poetic forms, departing from the normal rhymed couplet to the absurd! A living poet, Fred Brown, has recently had a whole volume of poetry published by the Yorkshire Dialect Society with assistance from the Yorkshire Arts Association. Some of Fred Brown's best work

dates from the 1940s, a poetry prize for "a poem about a poet" was won by "a poem about a poet" by "a poem about a poet".

"Not yet!" groaned the old man, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!"

"Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!"

"Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!"

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"Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!" "Not yet!" he said, "I'm not yet!"

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## Peculiar problems

DAVID WILSON:  
The Science of Self  
A Report on the New Immunology.  
346pp. Longman. £2.75.

"The science of self," "the new immunology". Add to these yet a third cryptic phrase, used by Sir Macfarlane Burnet, the greatest living immunologist, as the title of one of his publications—"self and not self", and one has a near perfect picture of the maelstrom into which so many modern scientists have cast their lot, hoping that out of it all will come a solution to one of the oldest problems of all time—that of self.

Let it be made clear that of the three catchphrases, only Sir Macfarlane's is scientifically—and probably philosophically—justified. Even though a multiplicity of ambitious scientists—some brilliant, many first-class—are involved, there is no such thing as a science of self. There are ample theories, some plausible, some stillborn, but to attempt to define these as scientific at this stage is just about as glaring an example of the misuse of the English language as Fowler himself could ever hope for.

Equally, immunology is not new. It goes back—like so much in medicine—to the heyday of Chinese medicine, to be revived again in the heyday of Arabian medicine, when material from smallpox pustules was used to induce immunity in those who had not had the disease. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu may have been an eccentric, but she has some claim to be the first English immunologist, and it was night on a century later before Jenner put smallpox vaccination on the orthodox medical map. David Wilson's attempt to denigrate this outstanding clinical research worker is one of the few blemishes in his book. Another is his resurrection, without any additional proof whatsoever, of what he himself describes as the "slightly malicious story" about Landsteiner.

From Jenner to Pasteur was but a short phase, and from the day of Pasteur, immunology, having come into its own, never looked back. It had phases when it retired to the more esoteric ivory towers—do blossoms forth into the public eye periodically as some new practical advance was made. In those days advances in medicine were not automatically "world shattering", and the modern generation of science writers that glories in public exploitation of such discoveries and advances did not exist.

There are, of course, fashions in medicine, as in all other spheres of life, and there were periods, as in the 1920s, when clinical interest in immunology tended to fade. The bacteriologists (immunologists had not yet split off from the parent stem), or allergists, were plugging away all the time. The results of their labours may not have been immediately productive or stimulating but, nevertheless, they were laying the sound foundation upon

which the modern generation of immunologists have leapt to the fore.

This leap had been long expected. The initial trends were stimulated by the increasing interest in skin grafting and corneal grafting. Intertwined with these two themes was that of blood transfusion. This had been brought to a fine art by the end of the Second World War, and some of the more enterprising backroom boys had seized upon the clues it offered of opening up vistas, hitherto only dreamt of in the more esoteric immunological circles.

With the advent of kidney transplantation immunology came into its own in a big way in an attempt to solve the problem of why the human body rejects tissue, such as a kidney, from another individual, and how this violent dislike, amounting to rejection, could be overcome. Whether or not Sir Macfarlane Burnet's clonal theory (why did he call it this, and not clonal?) Was it because of his intense, almost aggressive, Australian pride, combined with the traditional Australian dislike of being referred to as colonial? Is the final answer to the problem is still an open question. What can be said in its favour is that it has proved more productive than many other scientific theories.

Much has been learnt in these last exciting years in this field, and Mr Wilson, the science correspondent of the BBC, has made a valiant attempt to describe the rapidly moving scene. With the best will in the world, he has not succeeded in presenting a particularly clear account of the complex picture, but for this he can scarcely be blamed.

A shorter account would have been more comprehensible to the layman, but anyone with a modicum of scientific education will be well repaid if he is prepared to settle down to a serious study of the book. What he will have brought home to him again and again is how often theories fail in practice. Perhaps the most striking example in this field are the fresh difficulties cropping up almost daily as a result of the measures being taken to overcome the defence mechanism of the body in rejecting transplanted organs. Antilymphocytic serum, which was at one time thought to be the answer, has fallen into disrepute, though possibly only temporarily, while what are known as the immunosuppressive drugs are beginning to produce unpleasant delayed side-effects.

On the other hand, typing, on the same principle as the typing used in classifying groups of blood for transfusion purposes, has yielded not only a wealth of useful information, but has gone a considerable way towards making transplantation a safer and more satisfactory procedure. Whether transplantation will ever become the practical procedure that Mr Wilson suggests is problematical. What is much more to the point—and much more exciting—is the possibility that current theories in this field suggest that the answer to the problem of cancer may be nearer and not so complex as was once thought.

## Baby benefits

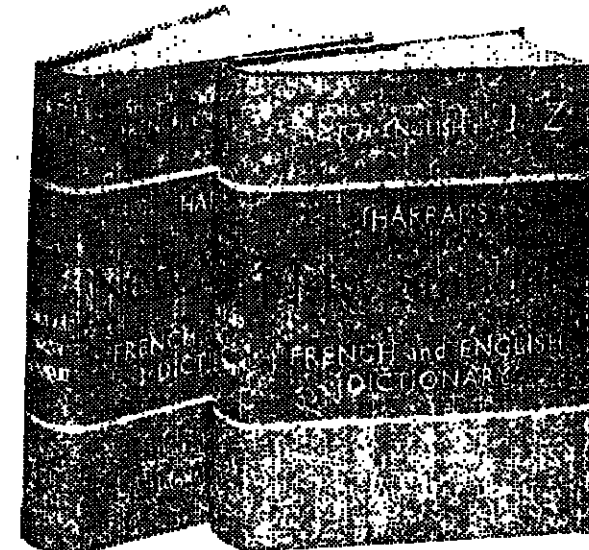
DONALD COURT and ANTHONY JACKSON (Editors):  
*Paediatrics in the Seventies*  
107pp. Oxford University Press for the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust. Paperback, £1.

The improvement in the health of children over the past twenty-five years is obvious: the only criterion available for measuring this improvement is to be found in the mortality figures supplied by the Registrar General. These confirm the general impression, for the perinatal mortality rate has fallen from 38 to 25 and the infantile mortality rate from 34 to 23 per thousand. It is disturbing that after infancy accidents are the commonest

causes of death: 36 per cent of all deaths in schoolchildren are a result of trauma. It is also reckoned that "one child in ten is left with either intellectual limitation, physical handicap, recurrent or established illness, educational inadequacy or difficulties in emotional control". It is for the care of these that the paediatric services of the 1970s should be planned. This short book gives an interesting pattern for the future, when all sick children may be gathered together in the paediatric departments of the district general hospitals. Perinatal disease and the various handicaps from which children suffer and which, if not cared for, will continue into adult life are two of the principal targets for the practice of paediatrics.

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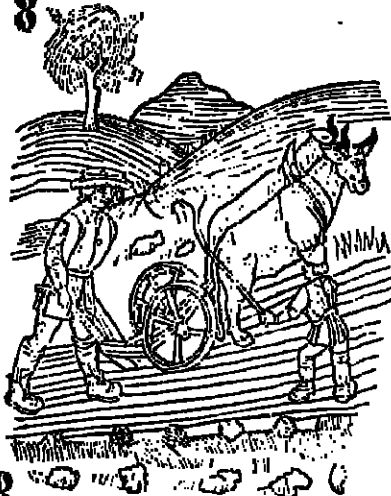
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## Viewpoint

### BY CLIVE JAMES

PEOPLE with high standards of  
junk are an ever-present threat.  
Whenever I join with a literatus  
in conversation about the trash we  
read in childhood, it invariably turns  
out that one of us devoured a better  
class of trash than the other. Speaking  
as the other, I can only announce a  
simmering envy for anyone who  
beefed up his reading skills on Rider  
Haggard, Rice Burroughs, Baroness  
Orcey and E. Phillips Oppenheim.  
Missing out on the stuff then, I missed  
out on it forever; there's no point in  
trying to catch up, and no sanction  
for it, since with the age of innocence  
far in the past it's no longer possible  
to ignore the fact that time put in on  
*She* is time subtracted from the perma-  
nent task of battling through the  
block-long sentences of *La Prison-  
nière*. Not to mention Thomas  
Mann: that I got through *Tod in  
Venedig* in German (learning the  
*Leserkreuz* with crossed eyes and nut  
clusters) can't go on forever serving  
as an excuse for not tackling *The  
Music-Mountain* in English. Another  
time, as Auden put it, has other lives  
to live. All one can do is take a  
crumb of comfort from having once  
read *King Solomon's Mines*—if that  
was the one about the cave full of  
spiders and the big white hunter who  
longed for a Gattling with which to  
clear a path through with linked  
warriors in five minutes. Pretty sure I  
read the actual book there, and not  
the *Classics Illustrated* sepia-  
coloured comic. Not, let it be said in  
passing, that the *Classics Illustrateds*  
were to be disparaged. Their comic-  
book version of the Bible was a better  
way of assimilating the key quotes  
than passing deckle-edged texts in a  
Sunday School album. Christ's  
speech-balloons were trimmed in pink,  
like clouds at sunset, and did a lot  
to focus the wandering juvenile atten-  
tion on their gnostic contents.

At home we had few books, but  
we did have a cupboard full of out-  
of-date magazines—the Australian  
edition of *Reader's Digest*, wartime  
copies of *Picture Post* and *Life*, and  
any amount of *Redbook*, *Colliers* and  
the *Saturday Evening Post*. I read  
them continually, as a supplement to  
my *Modern Marvels* encyclopedia.  
At about age ten I moved on to  
Biggles books, staying faithful to  
W. E. Johns for the two years I spent  
in an opportunity class—an institu-  
tion dedicated to providing under-  
bracketed IQs with bigger sand-trays.  
It was in this class that I received  
my first blurred hint of other realms.  
There was a day when selected mem-  
bers of the class were asked to stand  
up and give a summary of any book  
they might recently have read. I  
gave a masterly précis of *Biggles Flies  
East*, complete with an extended-arm  
version of the epic aerial duel  
between Bigglesworth and Von  
Stalheim. It was tedious to find this  
performance upstaged by some clown  
who had been dipping into the early  
chapters of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Having  
a schoolmaster for a father, my rival  
scholasticism was being brought up  
in an altogether superior  
intellectual climate. The hint did not  
take; I had no means of assessing its

implications. While my rival was  
doubtless moving on to the letters of  
Madame de Sévigné and the *Duno  
Elegies*, I made the huge jump from  
Biggles to the Saint, quickly becoming  
a world expert on the writings of  
Leslie Charteris.

As my teens wore on (the days  
consumed in a technical school  
where I read five mathematical sub-  
jects with small result) I added fur-  
ther detectives and freelance adven-  
turers to the roster. I read the com-  
plete works of Eric Stanley Gardner  
(including the A. A. Fair novels) in  
about a month, a feat of voracious  
celerity exactly equivalent to win-  
ning a pie-eating contest. I read all  
of Sapper—the wartime short stories  
being perhaps my first fleeting taste  
of realism—but none of Saki, who  
read untouched in that other world,  
the world of estimable achievement  
on which by a sad miracle my hungry  
eyes never impinged. Hilary Queen,  
entire; but never Raymond Chan-  
der. The Nero Wolfe books, but never  
Father Brown. Like a loser truffle-  
hound coming up with nothing but  
rocks, I must have had an infallible  
nose for rubbish.

In the two or three years before  
becoming eligible (just eligible) for  
university, I got on to war books,  
reading every best-selling author from  
Richard Pope (remember *Boldness  
Be My Friend*?) to Chester Wilmit,  
on every subject from the Tirpitz  
to midjet submarines. It was during  
this obsession that I stumbled on the  
first clear cases of quality in writing,  
diffident in ambition though they  
now seem: Pierre Clostermann and  
Paul Brickhill (especially in *The Great  
Escape*, although *The Dam Busters*  
was a more engrossing subject)  
bravely stood out. And from Russell  
Braddon's *The Naked Island* I got a  
mature literary experience of my  
life: the early chapters of that book  
of modern Sydney, with the possible  
exception of T. A. G. Hungerford's  
*The Ridge and the River* dealt with  
experience I could actually test, and  
seemed to endow a known reality  
with an extra significance. After that,  
more by accident than planning—I  
enrolled in the Arts faculty because  
I liked to draw—university happened.  
Happened overnight. I met a young  
poet on the first day, listened be-  
musledly to his chatter, and was read-  
ing *Four Quartets* on the second day.

The best you can claim for such a  
grossly inadequate educational back-  
ground is that it supplies a hefty  
impetus: once you finally get the  
message. Being used to reading a  
tremendous amount of slang was at  
least a quantitative preparation for  
reading a tremendous amount of  
literature; the sense of shame provid-  
ing an additional spur. That, at any  
rate, is the way I rationalize it. But  
there are some lacks that must remain  
clear losses. I found it reasonably  
easy to learn modern languages back  
on, but Latin was harder and Greek  
impossible. For anything in Latin  
beyond the simpler declarative sen-  
tences of Cornelius Nepos I need a

parallel text. A memory stocked  
with hundreds of lines of Virgil,  
Horace, Propertius and Catullus  
scarcely compensates for a deficiency  
like that: the lines were all learnt  
parrot-fashion, and one is always  
conscious of a shaky grasp on the  
poetry of any language when one  
cannot parse an average sentence of  
its prose. As for Greek, it will have  
to wait for a five-year stretch when  
there is nothing else to do. Reading  
Rider Haggard instead of finishing  
Protest is a minor crime compared  
with beginning Frodo instead of  
learning to read Homer, but the latter  
is the crime I now find myself com-  
mitting. One big compensation for  
being in such mental turmoil is, how-  
ever, impossible to deny: literature  
will always be an adventure for any-  
one who came to it late. One has  
the eagerness of gratitude, if not the  
confidence of universal scholarship.

I suppose I was forced towards the  
above reflections by the fact that life  
of late has been lots of action, little  
meditation and no study whatsoever.  
I am in the kind of fret that the  
medieval literati dreaded like heresy  
— alienated from the spirit of  
contemplation. The state of  
mind breeds strange jealousies. Who,  
one wonders sourly, is the best edu-  
cated man of recent times? Putting  
Curious into times past, it would  
probably be a toss-up between Edgar  
Wind and Gianfranco Contini. But  
no: it has to be Contini, with his  
habit of revealing whole new ranges  
of erudition at a few seconds' warn-  
ing—such as the time when he walked  
into his first-year Romance philology  
class at Florence University and  
greeted an Arab freshman in Arabic.  
What stuns you about Contini is that  
his learning never outstrips his judg-  
ment. His essays collected in that  
treasure-house of the mind, *Parimite  
di altri* (sic) on the stylistic differ-  
ences between Dante and Petrarch  
are instantly convincing to the lay  
reader of those two poets, yet the  
learning on which they are based is  
simply and strictly unapproachable.  
And just by sitting down to write  
about the intellectual experience con-  
ferred by reading a scholar like Con-  
tini, I find the sense of frustration  
ebbing away. Humbling in one way,  
it is liberating in another. By being  
beyond our aspirations, they help turn  
our aspirations towards encompassing  
aims. It is not a thing which should be  
said too easily, but now that I have  
said it I will feel better about spending  
another day working in front of the  
cimeras. Donne was right about the  
urge to study being the most un-  
governable of the passions. But there  
is still the rent.

The loneliness of the long-distance  
reader is an exquisite one: the re-  
wards for tackling and conquering  
the more impossible literary mon-  
sters are necessarily largely personal,  
since one is unlikely to encounter  
anyone else ready to evince a proper  
sense of inadequacy at not having  
attempted the task himself. In the  
four years since I finished *Motley's  
Rise of the Dutch Republic* I have  
been unable to meet (a) anyone who  
has read it, with whom to compare  
notes; and (b) anyone appropriately  
dissatisfied at not having read it. To  
compound the dissatisfaction, the  
only bit of the book I have succeeded  
in remembering is the bit about the  
little children crying in the streets—  
a line known even to people who  
think *Motley* is a theatrical con-  
tort. Useless to pretend that  
reading *Motley* was anything other  
than a struggle. I read *War and  
Peace* in two days, and a night, drawn  
forward like a thrown rider with his  
foot caught in a stirrup. *The Dutch  
Republic* was read by fixing a daily  
task (five pages of the Everyman  
edition) and convincing myself it  
was a ration. I hope to find *Motley*  
more compelling, as Prentice  
arguably was and Gibbon definitely  
was. The *Motley* has been an  
my shelves for years, a long-standing  
rebuttle in five fat volumes. *The  
Dutch Republic*, thank God, hasn't  
yet got into the house, very good  
for one's French, I understand, but  
breeze—Caxton's *Golden Legend* or  
*Lives of the Saints* are far better  
been. For the past few Saturday

mornings a set of  
been lined up on  
in the Cambridge  
for me to give a  
hold out for another  
The month after that  
way through it—  
isn't Livy.

Boswell said a man  
on his reading: it's  
suspect, at the heart  
I've been keeping a  
own for about five  
runs to eleven volu-  
all the detail of my  
God and the Supernatural—a  
Catholic statement of the Christian  
faith. This paper, which dealt with  
The Nature and Destiny of Man,  
already shows the direction of his  
interests, and it provides the perma-  
nent outer framework for all his  
future thinking on the subject of  
history. It is a little more personal  
than the rest of his work and illumi-  
nates the way he actually appro-  
priated his Christianity. Almost from  
the first far where he asserts the  
reality and importance of things  
factual, he brings some special  
considerations of his own to support  
his argument.

Then—for some years from  
pulsive activity. The 22—he was connected with the  
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of mental lacuna by a  
all the past easy to  
here he found friends who intro-  
duced him to the work of Frédéric  
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short passages from  
erent sources: but I  
Leopardi's *Zanichelli* (as he said) from Bazar's  
from books I already  
I suppose, I suppose  
anybody else who  
Shelton, damaging  
people stimulated in the early 1920s  
Spengler—differing from him in  
daily still, at the do-  
he tried to straighten  
that his beloved  
tion into a hunch.

## Duckworth

### HOMER

C. M. BOWRA

The last work of  
greatest of all Eng-  
sical scholars has  
finished on his de-  
he died last year. It  
clear, plain, the per-  
duction to Homer  
hundreds of years  
about him, whether  
you know Greek  
book about Homer  
of mauling and so re-  
Peler Levi

... carefully des-  
those who do not  
Greek and who may  
new to the subject  
demanding, allus-  
very clear study.  
... a very good book  
James Fenton

This lucid and sym-  
introduction to the  
Homer in the light of  
scholarship will be  
both to student and  
reader.  
R. F. Willeits  
Birmingham

It was unlikely that  
years would dim  
intellectual power and  
tive activity of Sir  
Bowra or that death  
at once still his great  
So it has proved to be  
able book for the  
reader.  
Christopher Train  
Daily Telegraph

Duckworth

# Religion's part in history



CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

The Dividing of Christendom  
Introduction by David Knowles  
286pp.

The Gods of Revolution  
Introduction by Arnold Toynbee  
173pp.

Sidgwick and Jackson. £3.25 each.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON WAS con-  
verted to Roman Catholicism  
in 1914, when he was twenty-  
five years old. Six years later he pro-  
duced what may have been his first  
published essay for a volume entitled  
*God and the Supernatural*—a  
Catholic statement of the Christian  
faith. This paper, which dealt with  
The Nature and Destiny of Man,  
already shows the direction of his  
interests, and it provides the perma-  
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future thinking on the subject of  
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than the rest of his work and illumi-  
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Shelton, damaging  
people stimulated in the early 1920s  
Spengler—differing from him in  
daily still, at the do-  
he tried to straighten  
that his beloved  
tion into a hunch.

In view of the nature of his  
subsequent writing, it was no doubt  
a good thing that he had tried in the  
first place to come to grips with  
primitive religion and very early  
cultural history. In any case, histo-  
rians ought to take advantage of the  
work of the various social scientists;  
and, as one can see in *The Making of  
Europe*, Dawson's studies in the  
1920s enriched his commentary,  
prompting him to fresh interpreta-  
tions or hypotheses or correlations,  
when he came to more ordinary  
historical work. Both these policies  
of his held dangers as well as  
advantages, however; and, though  
he may have been right in a way  
(may even have been making a  
significant point), there were perils  
in a further thing to which he  
confessed—namely, a disposition to  
go perhaps a little farther than other  
people in his belief in the cyclic  
element in history. Dawson, then,  
was able to produce a hundred  
inspired comments but might still go  
wrong in a main thesis because he  
forgot that he was not now dealing  
with primitive societies, or he used

the question of "the rise of Western  
civilization". What was involved  
now was something more like straight  
history and it appears in *The Making  
of Europe*—a study of the Dark  
Ages, regarded by him as "the most  
creative of all periods, precisely be-  
cause society and culture were then  
in their formative stages. He tells us  
that between the fifth century and the  
eleventh there occurred the conversion  
of the West, the creation of  
Christian art and Catholic liturgy,  
but also something like the birth of  
a civilization—all this taking place  
almost in the clear light of history.  
He warns to the history, loving even  
sheer narrative and description when  
he has a theme like this; and he de-  
lights in the little anomalies, the  
paradoxes of the historical process.  
He becomes eloquent when he sums  
up the work of St Boniface in eighth-  
century Germany. Perhaps he is  
excited most of all by the rise of  
Islam in the seventh century. Since  
he was theoretically so aware of the  
importance of geography to the his-  
torian, it is surprising that his volume  
said too little about the birth of  
nations and the deeper forces which  
in this period brought the political  
map of Europe to a shape that is  
recognizable today.

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subsequent writing, it was no doubt  
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people in his belief in the cyclic  
element in history. Dawson, then,  
was able to produce a hundred  
inspired comments but might still go  
wrong in a main thesis because he  
forgot that he was not now dealing  
with primitive societies, or he used

some generalization too inflexibly,  
or he failed to see how a given  
conclusion of his really sprang from  
what he saw too much as a cyclic  
pattern in events. All this affected  
chiefly a number of smaller works  
in which he applied his principles to  
more modern history or presented a  
message to the present day.

He was enchanted by the idea of  
a society entirely Christian, or (since  
he saw this to be impossible) a  
society developing like the medieval  
one under the presiding influence of  
Christianity. Yet the other half of  
him was under no illusion about  
such mundane arrangements, and he  
could say:

Christianity has never been more than  
a leaven working in the world... She  
sows her seed broadcast among pub-  
licans and harlots, in the corruption  
of the great Greek and Roman cities and  
the welter of barbarism and violence  
of the Dark Ages, in the slums of  
Manchester and New York.

He tells us: "The only really and  
specifically Christian politics are the  
politics of the world to come."  
Also: "The true social function of  
religion is not to busy itself with  
economic or political reforms but to  
save civilization from itself by re-  
vealing to men the true end of life  
and the nature of reality."

In various forms of statement he  
confessed that, if Europe after the  
Barbarian invasions had moved to  
something like unanimity in the  
faith, this had been as result of  
authoritarian policies and mass-con-  
version at a time when the herd-  
spirit was so much stronger than at  
later periods. He seems not to have  
realized that such solidarity in the  
Christian faith might have depended  
as (time went by) on conditions and  
factors very much like those that  
make for a similar kind of solidarity  
under communism in the twentieth  
century. He could not see that the  
beautiful Christian society might be  
destined all the same to be an  
interim affair, corresponding to an  
intermediate state in the history of  
civilization—a thing not to be re-  
garded as (ordinarily speaking) re-  
peatable, not likely to be tolerated  
after men had reached what they  
might feel to be a state of greater  
maturity.

And so, having studied the origins  
of Western Christendom, and having

celebrated the medieval system in  
two volumes of Gifford Lectures, he  
addressed himself in his final period  
to the problem of modern seculari-  
zation. At first he had ascribed the  
phenomenon to the Renaissance and  
traced it back to the fifteenth cen-  
tury, and he had once noted the wide  
range of factors which had helped  
to produce this movement. On one  
occasion he tells us how the influ-  
ence even of Aquinas worked in this  
direction; for though St Thomas  
"had no intention of turning  
men's minds from the spiri-  
tual world to the study of par-  
ticular and contingent being",  
the new appreciation of the rights of  
nature and reason which his philoso-  
phy involved "marked a turning-  
point in the history of European  
thought".

When so many factors and forces  
were moving in the same direction,  
Dawson ought perhaps to have learnt  
rather to the idea of straight  
progress than to the cyclic pattern,  
especially as the kind of Providence  
in which he believed was one that is  
supposed to lead the world into  
novelties beyond any previous imagi-  
ning. In any case, he held that  
religion made Western society  
dynamic, partly because of the con-  
flict between the spiritual and the  
temporal, and partly because the  
Christian was always out to change  
the character of the world.  
But he does not seem to  
accept the view that when  
things go well, human beings are apt  
to develop out of some former state  
of tutelage and that this emancipa-  
tion may be a basis for a moral  
advance. And sometimes he blamed  
the Reformation for the seculariza-  
tion of Western culture, which he  
saw as a great tragedy. If at one  
moment he could regard the Rector-  
ate as itself a reassertion of the  
role of religion in society, he could  
hold also that "sociological" and  
nationalistic causes had been  
throughout history the real origin of  
all such heresies and schisms. He  
could say even that "secularism in  
the Church led to secularization in  
the State", as though, at an earlier  
stage and a profounder level, these  
two things were not rather the twin  
consequences of the same causes. He  
would not have accepted the view  
that the Reformation occurred (or  
succeeded, so far as it did) because  
the medieval Church had done its  
work so well—undertaking a colos-  
sal internal missionary task, and  
inducing the mass-converted (per-  
haps really the half-converted) to  
bring their religion home to them-  
selves, and so to interiorize it. That  
they acquired a heightened sense of  
the urgency of the matter, a height-  
ened sense of their personal  
responsibility in regard to their faith.  
And, though he wanted a dynamic  
civilization, not a rigid one, he seems  
not to have realized that a victory  
for religious uniformity in the six-  
teenth century might have reduced  
the West to the deadly stillness of  
oriental societies.

In his main line of thought per-  
haps his most stimulating com-  
ment—and his most severe injunc-  
tion—comes in *The Historic Reality  
of Christian Culture* (1964):

The renewal of a Christian civiliza-  
tion does not involve the creation of a  
totally new civilization but rather the  
cultural awakening or reactivation of  
the Christian minority. Our civilization  
has become secularised largely because  
the Christian element had adopted a  
passive attitude and allowed the leader-  
ship of culture to pass to what till  
then had been the non-Christian  
minority. And this cultural passivity  
has not been due to any profound  
existentialist concern with the human  
predicament and divine judgment, but  
on the contrary to a tendency toward  
social conformity and too ready an  
acceptance of the values of a secular-  
ized society. It is the intellectual and  
social inertia of Christians that is the  
real obstacle to a restoration of Christian  
culture.

This is partly true, and the answer to  
it—though not a complete answer—  
may be that we can become too

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Jon Silkin

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directly intent upon culture; for culture seems to benefit sometimes from the uncalculated effects of, for example, the quest of the early monks for the spiritual life, and even secular culture today shows the influence of its Christian antecedents. There exists, indeed, as a recognizable thing throughout history what might be called a Catholic piety which achieves a certain timelessness as an end in itself, but which can still produce the kind of mundane good which nobody could have thought of in advance.

On this whole field—and concerning the period from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment—there has appeared posthumously *The Dividing of Christendom*, which reproduces some of the lectures Dawson gave between 1958 and 1962 when he was the first occupant of the Charles Chauncy Stillman Chair of Catholic Studies at Harvard. His work is never so strong in the modern period as in the medieval, and his thinking is possibly affected by the fact that he unconsciously transposes to the modern field the kind of patterns that he had found in remoter ages. One reads him for the sake of his commentary, for though he covers old ground he revises his thought here and there, and pokes his mind into unfamiliar corners of a subject; also he remembers that he is addressing an American audience. He now says that "the breakdown of the medieval synthesis and the loss of the unity of medieval Christendom" was a gradual process running from AD 1275 to 1525, though secularization itself was postponed by "the Protestant Reformation and the restoration of Catholic culture in the Baroque period". He had seen the importance of the scientific movement of the seventeenth century, but he once offered the opinion that the

synchronizing of Newton with the emergence of secularism should be regarded as merely fortuitous. He still holds that the division of the Church was the thing really responsible for the great de-Christianization that occurred. He is ready to say that "the immediate cause of the secularization of European culture was the frustration and encouragement resulting from a century of religious wars and above all for the inconclusiveness of their end". And, as usual, even those who radically disagree with him will end with the feeling that no doubt there is something in what he says.

On top of this, he had come to feel that as time went on, Catholicism and Protestantism had both sprouted into different cultures—different customs and mundane outlooks—and that these had their most serious effects among the great masses of ordinary people. He says that "as an historian" he is "convinced that the main source of Christian divisions and the chief obstacle to Christian unity" have been and are in this wider, lower realm of general outlook, general culture. He reminds us that "men who have lost all conscious connection with religion... retain the social and national prejudices that they have inherited from their Catholic and Protestant backgrounds".

The range of his reading had always been remarkable, but when he comes again to still more recent periods his knowledge is more limited, he suffers from defective sympathies, and at times he falls into ordinary recapitulation, possibly to meet the needs of a student audience. His second posthumous work, *The Gods of Revolution*, does not possess the power which it might have had if he had come to the task as a younger man; and it will have interest chiefly for those who wish simply to learn his views about the antecedents, the events, and the

consequences of the French Revolution, or take pleasure in his occasional flashes of insight.

He holds that the tremendous forces at work in the Revolution are an actual measure of the power of the ideas of the philosophes; and perhaps he does not allow for the quality of the demonic that is added to a piece of history when we merely allow events to run out of control—releasing the world to a flood of unforeseeable change. He remembers that he is a Catholic and puts an emphasis on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the Vendée, and the role of the priest, Jacques Roux; while, a little later, he produces a considerable passage on William Blake. He points out that "conscious social and political revolutions, which we in modern Europe take for granted, are extraordinarily rare in history. They occur only when a civilization has lost its spiritual unity." He uses Thomas Paine to bring out the point that now, for the first time, there emerged the "conception of political revolution as part of a universal and almost cosmic change which far transcended the circumstances of any particular state". He says that "Paris, still at heart the old city of the League, needed no teaching from America or England to learn the lesson of Revolution". He tells us that "the ancien régime was destroyed by the lawyers who owed their existence to its post and their wealth to its abuses". No doubt he is deliberately teasing us when he declares incidentally, "it is Philip II that had been victorious over the Dutch and English and Huguenots, modern bourgeois civilization would never have developed and capitalism, in so far as it existed, would have acquired an entirely different complexion". It was never sufficiently discriminating when he touched on the rise of capitalism.

I could easily bring this history of persecution forward into the present day, but I feel the bizarre diversion of your critics has already led me and your readers much too far into another new area of irrelevance and I would end with what is central to this issue. Is a work of fiction fairly treated as anthropology? I do not ask you for the name and address of your critics, because I know the tradition of anonymity to which your journal is pledged, but only his occupation. In view of the magic spell anthropology seems to have cast over his senses and judgment, is he himself by any chance an anthropologist? And must we now anticipate that whenever a work of fiction appears with a primitive character in it, you will submit it to anthropological catechism? If that were to happen, the considerations of art, which seek to enlarge and enlighten and not compartmentalize human awareness, will vanish from our pages, and we could easily find ourselves in the absurd situation where a novel which has as its hero a man suffering from an impacted wisdom tooth, will have to be reviewed by dentists.

LAURENS van der POST.  
Tunbridge, Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

## Male Piggery

Sir—Edna Decker asks (July 21) whether men carried on their wives' heads in their burials near Inverness in 1722, an incident illustrated in my *History of the Scottish People*. I am grateful to her for the picture from Burt's *Letters from the Highlands* where the habit is described but she is wrong in saying that the men carried their wives on their heads. I take the reason for this to be that the men carried their wives on their backs and the women carried their husbands on their backs. I have not yet been able to find a reference to this in any of the sources I have consulted.

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there was presumably no pier or harbour, perhaps because the rise and fall of the tide would make it difficult to use a form of leather leggings and shoes which would easily corrode in salt water, was perhaps too expensive or too uncomfortable if you could actually get your wife to carry you on board instead. I may add that Burt, as an Englishman, was evidently shocked and surprised to see skirts drawn up to "an indecent height". English travellers often noticed this feature of Scottish life since women were accustomed to wash clothes in a tub or stream even in the coldest weather treading the garments with their bare feet and their skirts tucked well up. There are seventeenth-century descriptions and Victorian photographs of girls doing this. Similarly women in Scotland were used as beasts of burden to carry heavy loads of coal or fish in different parts of the country. The fishermen of Inverness were perhaps only combining two well-established domestic habits in carrying their men through the water to the boats.

T. C. SMOUT.  
19 South Gillsland Road, Edinburgh 10.

## Coleridge

Sir—The reference in your special correspondent's article (July 21) on the Coleridge exhibition in the British Museum to "Luther's *Colloquia mensalia* (whose title he [Coleridge] used

for his *Table Talk*)" leads one to the alarming conclusion that your correspondent is unaware of his book in question, together with its title, *Specimens of the Table Talk of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, is the unadorned product and masterpiece of the poet's nephew and son-in-law, Henry Nelson Coleridge.

MORCHARD BISHOP.  
Velliams, Morebath, near Tiverton,  
Devon, EX16 9AL.

## George Jackson

Sir—Is it possible to try to rest the myth of George Jackson as an innocent victim of a dreadful penal system which appears in your account of his latest literary effort, *Blood in My Eye* (July 7)?

George Jackson was not just "once charged with a \$70 theft". George Jackson was arrested for armed robbery and this arrest was only the last of many. He was a professional hood who clearly was willing to take human life in pursuit of his own desires. He was not "killed" in the usual way, by prison guards, but was shot down while armed with a 9-millimetre, semi-automatic pistol which holds thirteen shots. His lawyer, who is thought to have passed the pistol to him, is still in hiding, and one wonders if this, too, is part of the usual procedure.

The American penal system undoubtedly could be reformed, but I suspect

that any reforms will have little effect upon the George Jacksons of this world.

L. PEARCE WILLIAMS.  
Department of History, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850, USA.

## Luis Cernuda

Sir—In your issue of July 7 you reviewed *The Poetry of Luis Cernuda*, edited by Anthony Edkins and Derek Harris. We should like to point out that University of London Press Ltd is the exclusive agent for New York, University Press in the United Kingdom and Europe and that this book will not be available in this country until September, priced at £4.75.

H. S. FOSTER.  
University of London Press Ltd, St Paul's House, 8/12 Warwick Lane, London EC4P 4AH.

## Herrick

Sir—The price paid at Sotheby's in 1965 for the Robert Herrick Commonplace Book was incorrectly given as £23,000 (July 14): it was in fact £24,000.

YOUR REVIEWER.

We regret the late publication of this issue of the TLS, which is a result of the industrial dispute.

# Commentary

Publishers still think it worth while to tell us how and where their authors live. This novelist, says the brief prospectus on his dust-jacket, lives with wife and four children in Sussex; this other one is not married and lives in SW7. These bald facts we must then interpret to fit in with the prevailing myths about life in London and life in the country. Novelist One we can visualize hiking snailily across country, his personal scribbles nicely in tune with that of his arable environment; Novelist Two, on the other hand, is a jumpy, preoccupied character, barrenly trudging the pavements. Yet when we turn to the novels they actually write, the view from the South Downs seems to be just about the same as that from the Fulham Road. As a factor in the imagination, sense of place is weak to non-existent; place, for most of us, is where we live, not where we think about.

Books which make a lot of a specific place quite easily become literary events, a *Saturday Night* and *Sunday Morning* or an *Akenfield*, whose reception has a strong element of surprise that local life could lead to anything as good and universal as this. These would be surprising events but simply excellent books if we had not grown so incurably metropolitan, and assumed that the metropolitan is the same as being without a place altogether. This conviction, that London is normal, and non-London something to which we can at best condescend, is reinforced by the fact that the Arts, like the economy, seem to need special policies for the "Regions", with all that that implies in underdevelopment.

The five special articles in this "Sense of Place" number of the TLS are intended as a challenge to the received wisdom about all such "regionalism" (a word one is ashamed to introduce after Geoffrey Grigson's accurate and scornful aside on its current usage). A genuine placelessness is clearly impossible, but the sense of place is far stronger in some social settings than in others. At its most potent, sense of place becomes pride of place, as with the writers of Wales and Scotland, whose collective ambitions are described by Gwyn Jones and Edwin Morgan; or with the Yorkshire dialect poet whose verses are quoted by Stanley Ellis. Among those who lack any political or linguistic motive to distinguish themselves, the sense of place is a milder but still productive feeling, notably in local history, whose significance for the study of history

as a whole is demonstrated in the article by Alan Everitt. In sum, the five articles escape, we hope, an obsession with "literature" in the restricted sense of the word, that is, "creative writing". It is an insult to any community to assess its cultural achievement exclusively by the number of novels or poems its members turn out. There are plenty of other local activities which are cultural in anyone's meaning of the word, and to try to limit the term to creative writing is itself an indication of metropolitan bigotry.

Nottingham is the centre of the region that both spawned and spurned D. H. Lawrence. It has tended to regard him as one who rejected his origins, turned his back on the class from which he sprang, and betrayed his provincial culture. One and all the charges are false. So contends the catalogue of "Young Burt: an Exhibition of the early years of D. H. Lawrence" which runs at Nottingham Castle until the end of August. Though, judging by the good-looking number of people wandering through its galleries, local pique with the author must have long since subsided. And, surely, it can only have been the colliery proprietors who would have had any desire to spurn Lawrence, since he shows an affection for the Derbyshire pitles throughout his work. Indeed, in *Sons and Lovers* (1913), Paul Morel's equivocal view of local working-class life, with its violent frustrations and insubordinate bonhomie, is a good deal less affectionate than that of Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), in which that celebrated gamekeeper, faced with the horrors of industrial urbanization, tells Connie that things would be all right if only men would start wearing tight striped trousers and learn to hop, skip and dance. But the exhibition itself wisely steers clear of Lawrence's written work, letting the "places" speak for itself without being tendentious about Lawrence's "sense" of it.

For a variety of reasons—the Lawrence family had no camera, Lawrence himself leapt from obscurity to notoriety—there is very little in the way of illustrative material on his early years. The organizers consequently widened their focus, so that the exhibition has become a sort of three-dimensional essay in social history, if you like. One does like it, with only two exceptions: the stage-prop "rainbow" placards which adorn the floor and walls could well have remained non-dimensional; and the creaky

eight-foot toy roc, a highly combustible looking "phoenix", will keep Lawrence spinning in his grave until September 1 at the earliest.

Otherwise the approach is surprisingly successful. One takes a chronological stroll through Lawrence's early years: through a mock-up of an Eastwood collier's kitchen, complete with blackened stove, tin bath and a shelf-full of the works of Ruskin; past his High School text-books, his desk at Haywood's factory, his schoolroom: all interspersed with Lawrencean accoutrements. Along the walls are some excellently chosen photographs—suitably murky ones of Brinsley Colliery, cheerier studies of fêtes, haymaking—various portraits of relations, friends, contemporaries, and such incidentals as Haywood's 1902 catalogue and two handbills for the Nottingham Mechanics Institute. There is, too, perhaps an over-generous selection of Lawrence's paintings (including two groping attempts to copy Greiffenhagen's "An Idyll") which are presented as a kind of pictorial analogue of Lawrence's literary development: exploration, imitation, growing assurance, and so on. One is, of course, interested to see these, but also thankful that the analogy is not a very close one.

Besides the first three chapters of "Paul Morel", later *Sons and Lovers*, there is another, very different, manuscript item of particular interest: the complete Home Office file on *The Rainbow*. It appears that the book was seen not only as obscene but politically subversive also. The catalogue explains: "All that is left of the... file... forms three groups of papers. The first two concern questions raised in the House by Mr Morrell... as to whether Lawrence's legal privacy had been invaded by police action. The third—astonishingly, since there was only the Depression and not a war to excuse it—deals with a contemplated further prosecution after Lawrence's death in 1930. The reasoning here, in the third set, is simply run-of-the-mill political: 'It would certainly be unwise to give the works of Lawrence any further advertisement.'"

These papers are tellingly placed alongside some ferocious posters advertising the First World War. The exhibition, finally, evokes what one would have to call Lawrence's whole context. The "sense of place" is evoked, also, but in such a way that it reinforces his writing without attempting to make any simple equations between the two.

# To the Editor

## Book Prices

Sir—John B. Brown (July 21) introduces an attractive argument against highly priced reprints—their ready availability and cheaper prices of the original editions on the second-hand market. This argument is often expressed, is superficially comforting to the second-hand booksellers, and is irrelevant.

Let us suppose that a librarian has been asked by a faculty member to obtain a copy of a book in the "nineteenth-century ecclesiastical biography field". He has two courses open to him. He can waste conscientiously through every second-hand book list and catalogue, received by his library (and hundreds of catalogues, brochures, flyers and other promotional "bumf" thump on to his desk every day of the year), follow this up by writing to all the specialist booksellers in this field, and then perhaps include the title on a "wants-list" which will be submitted to a bookseller who will advertise for him in one of the trade periodicals.

He may get the book by using one of these methods. The time and money thus spent may well be worth it. The apparent abundance of copies in dusty bookshops' basements will have little effect on these processes. Even in the field of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical biography, the second-hand booksellers cannot be expected to instantaneously offer multiple copies of specific titles to the few hundreds of libraries who form the market for the reprint.

The librarian's second course is to write to the publisher or contact his "Books in Print" bibliographies. If the title has been reprinted he can then quickly obtain a copy.

As a second-hand bookseller I could bore you, Sir, for hours with my complaints against the reprint publishers, but one late conviction has that Mr Brown's thesis is not a fallacy.

C. C. KOHLER.  
141 High Street, Dorling, Surrey.

be interested from time to time, and we last reviewed the price at the end of March, 1972, when we were planning publication of the next volume, Volume VII, which will appear in November. We have kept all these volumes at the same price, and the cost of printing requires the published price of Volume VII to be £5.50.

As you will realize, the bulk of the sales of these books occurs on first publication, but we still have to keep all the other volumes in print, as a service to librarians, scholars, etc. If we do not price books at replacement cost, we would very rapidly go out of business, and for this reason we have to raise prices from time to time. The published price of books to their replacement cost, particularly where the cost of binding has gone up enormously, as in this case.

I am concerned to learn that Mr Alderson received our Academic Book News in May, as he has mailed no months earlier, with a notice clearly printed on it that prices were subject to change without notice. To meet the mailing date, the Book News had to be prepared in January, before we fixed the price for Volume VII.

NORMAN FRANKLIN.  
Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd,  
Broadway House, 68-74 Carter Lane,  
London EC4V 5EL.

Sir—John Brown is quite right when he says (July 21) that original editions are very expensive reprints are still available on the second-hand market. I have myself sometimes paid as little as 5p for nineteenth-century books now being reprinted at several pounds. But second-hand booksellers do not always offer such bargains. In a recent catalogue of modern and experimental poetry, one bookseller is offering *The Daily Telegraph Magazine* of August 15, 1968 (containing an article on concrete poetry) at £2. This magazine is still available from *The Daily Telegraph* at cost price.

ANDREW BELSEY.  
6 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DH.

## 'A Story Like the Wind'

Sir—It is a bit much that your critic should now accuse me (June 30) of "se-

entific claims" he finds "scientifically wanting" when I have tried so hard to prevent the fiction that in my *Story Like the Wind* from being dissected as some kind of anthropological treatise. As a result, another new process of discovery and error has been launched, so that when he declares incidentally, "it is Philip II that had been victorious over the Dutch and English and Huguenots, modern bourgeois civilization would never have developed and capitalism, in so far as it existed, would have acquired an entirely different complexion". It was never sufficiently discriminating when he touched on the rise of capitalism.

But there are, Sir, as you as an editor of a journal concerned with the whole area of human awareness must know, other and more complete ways of experiencing men and their societies than the anthropological compartment in which your critic is confined. He declares one year spent with a Bushman fragment in one special area sufficient for his blend of instant anthropology. Sir, grew up with Bushman survivors, have been profoundly concerned with their culture and culture as well as the desperate problem of their survival in some forty-five years, which your critic dismisses with such reprehensible superficiality and indifference. I have not known them not just through books as your critic alleges, but also through direct contact. I have seen the remains of this unique race as left in South Africa, the Bechuanaland that is now Botswana, South-West Africa and Angola.

It is this experience which, though the years devoted to it I do not care to be nearly enough, I have tried to pass on to other men, because it seemed to me one else living at the moment either prepared or in a position to do so. Nothing that I have known over those long years gives me anything except extreme misgiving about the chances of survival. In fact, at the fringes of the Kalahari only last year received most moving and urgent pleas for help from Bushmen who had even more doomed than ever in the political contexts in which they live themselves. As a result I am prepared to expedite to go yet again to the area in the New Year to investigate and try to help.

To any of your readers who may be induced by your critic's claim that the only enemies of the Bushmen are "disease and bad hunting parties" I would recommend them to turn to the authoritative history of Southern Africa, which your critic would be able to quote, which you, Sir, and if you should think that ignorance is too hard a word, I would like you to consider only other alternatives, which would be a deliberate suppression of a whole something of which I am not bored, your critic would be able to quote, which you, Sir, and if you should think that ignorance is too hard a word, I would like you to consider only other alternatives, which would be a deliberate suppression of a whole something of which I am not bored, your critic would be able to quote, which you, Sir, and if you should think that ignorance is too hard a word, I would like you to consider only other alternatives, which would be a deliberate suppression of a whole something of which I am not bored, your critic would be 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## Lyric versions

### Medieval Song

Edited and translated by James J. Wilhelm  
416pp. Allen and Unwin. £3.75.

### Medieval Latin Lyrics

Translated and Introduced by Brian Stock.  
75pp. Brookline, Mass.: David R. Godine. \$12.50 (Deluxe edition, \$25).

Brian Stock's anthology of seven-teenth century Latin lyrics, printed with the original texts on facing pages, and James Wilhelm's 200 or so translations from half-a-dozen medieval languages both include renderings of "Levis exurgit Zephirus" which nicely sum up their different approaches to the art of translation. The poet contrasts the joys of spring with his own melancholy; the second stanza goes like this:

Ver purpurum exili,  
ornatus suos induit,  
aspergit terram floribus,  
lignu siluorum frondibus.

Mr Stock translates rather flatly in free-verse rhythms:

Cheerfully Spring awakens,  
puts on his best clothes,  
scatters the earth with flowers,  
the boughs of the trees with blossoms.

Professor Wilhelm changes the metre, keeps the rhyme scheme, and takes some risks.

Scarlet Spring comes walking out  
With gaudy clothes wrapped about,  
Sprinkling land with many flowers,  
Hanging frouds on woodland bowers.

By and large the risks come off. The lyrics are of taste rather than of accuracy. In the "Veni Creator" "thou balm for agony" is not encouraging as a translation for "spiritualis unctio", while "Let peace reign for many a day" does not convey the poetic register of the original "Pacemque domes protinus". "Ever gentle among the crass ones" is a disastrous rendering of "inter omnes mitis" in the "Ave Maria Stilla". Some half-lines are not translated at all in Wolfram's "Sine Klaven" and "You damn parish!" is a despairing attempt at "C'est Antecrist!" in "Se j'ayme et sers la bello de bon hait".

But Professor Wilhelm's collection remains a tour de force not so much for the range of languages as for faithfully reflecting the whole gamut of poetic register in medieval verse. The great Latin lyrics appear here in translations of a skill to which the publishers of vernacular liturgies

have not yet aspired. This is a fine and courageous attempt to render a truly representative selection of medieval verse in such a way as to allow the reader who cannot find or understand the original texts a real insight into their spirit and meaning. A score of original texts are printed for comparison, and there are helpful introductions to each linguistic section.

Mr Stock has set about a different enterprise. His is a beautifully printed book with some attractively naïf woodcuts by Fritz Kredel printed direct from the blocks. The book is expensive (the dust-cover says ten dollars, the publisher's slip says twelve-fifty, or "de luxe" at twenty-five), but it is limited to four thousand copies. The selection of seventeen Latin lyrics, like the introduction, is thoughtful, but the whole undertaking is somewhat precious. If Nolke's editor described "Quid tu, virgo" as his best poem, we scarcely need to savour the untranslated quotation "sein schönstes Gedicht".

The translations themselves are neither accurate nor poetically faithful.

## Liturgical stagecraft

### FLETCHER COLLINS Jr.

*The Production of Medieval Church Music-Drama*  
356pp. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia. \$17.50.

Although the established church, universally acknowledged as the rock of ages, has recently become involved with the age of rock, it still has much to explore within the sacred boundaries of its own heritage, as has been proved most successfully by the revival of liturgical dramas of the calibre of *The Play of Daniel*, and mystery plays such as those of York and Wakefield. Many scholars and producers have contributed to this revival, and Fletcher Collins (who has directed eight of these medieval music-dramas) follows the best traditions of the practical theorists by exploring and discussing the artistic possibilities available to modern enthusiasts, and the manner in which these possibilities can be put to good use.

Professor Collins's book is divided into two main parts. In the first he provides a thorough commentary—historical, literary, and musical—on sixteen of the most important dramas; in the second he offers ancillary material of practical inter-

est to producers. Throughout the volume, scholarship and practical insight go cheerfully hand in hand, while for the casual reader there is some help in the standardization of sub-headings. The tone and quality of each play, its major episodes, its characterization, the movement and gesture required, costumes and staging, all receive careful and intelligent coverage.

Where different versions of the same drama give rise to conflicting readings in text, music, or stage directions (if one may stretch a rubric to that point), the author sifts the evidence with commendable skill and usually comes up with an acceptable solution. His suggestions regarding production derive partly from the original texts (or modern editions), and partly from visual sources such as medieval book illuminations, frescoes, and carving. Large numbers of these are reproduced in black-and-white, and some in colour, for the benefit and inspiration of readers, who are thus given the opportunity to seek their own interpretation of the biblical scenes if for any reason they do not agree with the suggestions offered.

While paying tribute to the lavish productions of *Daniel* and *Herod*

as given by the New York Pro Musica, the author makes it clear that these resources were in most cases far beyond those available in medieval times. Modern interpreters of the dramas need not therefore feel inadequate if their wardrobes and their collection of ancient instruments are not on a par with those of the excellent American group. What is needed, perhaps more than sheet spectacle, is an ability to be at once with the spirit of the original, and to draw out its essence in song and movement through subtleties of vocal art and gesture.

Many of the original rubrics are quoted during the course of each discussion, and reliable English translations are usually provided. In one instance, however, a small liberty results in a misleading direction to the singers. The Monza manuscript of the *Vita* to the *Sophia* cites the antiphon "Et valde tunc" with the indication that it is to be sung three times, "et chorus similiter respondet", which is translated "the choir always sings the same responsory". We are dealing here with an antiphon, not a responsory, and the rubric means that the choir should respond with the last word only—Alleluia.

## Troubadour style

### J. H. MARSHALL (Ed.)

*The "Razos de Trobar" of Raimon Vidal and associated texts*  
184pp. Oxford University Press for the University of Durham. £5.25.

The *Razos de trobar*, written in the early thirteenth century by the Catalan Raimon Vidal, is the earliest surviving work to give serious attention to the poetic language used by the troubadours of both Provence and Catalonia. The success of the work can be gauged from the number of extensions and adaptations which it underwent in the later stages of the thirteenth century, and it is the peculiar merit of J. H. Marshall's new edition to bring this whole critical tradition together in a single elegant, compact and extremely scholarly volume, which contains, besides the *Razos de trobar* themselves, the *Doctrina d'Art* of Terramagnino da Pisa (the only one of the six texts which is in verse), the *Regles de trobar* of Jofre de Foixà, the anonymous *Doctrina de compendre dictat* (which Mr Marshall very convinc-

ingly ascribes to Jofre de Foixà), and two very short pieces in MS Ripoll 12, the same (irritably, allied to a whole gamut of critical theories, not least those raised by the troubadour quotations in the *Razos*), and out steps Voelke's edition of the *Doctrina*, which has faced these 13th-century texts and the investigation of their antecedents. His examination of the manuscript cooperation has descended on the text, but there is evidence that some features of the text do not command a philosophy, especially devotion they did. Many writers who shared practice, educators and others) have been or for which only decided that some approach to the troubadour writing of the account be overlooked (including the recent past) logist concerned with his as a positive encouragement in his field. The history of contemporary writing through the lens of the text and discussion. The examined and the edition for Scottish literary achievements shrewdly, the Lallans Society, Communi closely argued comment, Alan Albannach (the Scottish gives us a definitive edition), and Club Leub-Mr Marshall calls "The Highland Book Club" are dition."

Above all, he justifies his aim as a "tradition" which taken together are beginning, showing how, day to plot out, show, recommend varied nature of the develop the whole literary cul- (defining standards of Scotland. The fact that the literary culture of Scotland" is were often clearly and plastically phrased for what ferent milieu, separately, actually feel, write, read, place," they can be said, sing and act, and obviously common spirit clearly, literature of any place will them from the other side to some extent as unamen- thirteenth and fourteenth century encouragement as to polemic "which theorize about poetry. You can't help Sholok- and the literary tradition you can't hinder Solzhenitsyn. don't poetry," largely, the bristly, defensive divisive- the origin of its sub- of so much Scottish culture, (indirect) for which, however well-rooted it has been in by the diffusion of differences and real difficulties, enjoyed," this, in the end, a long andings and not enal tradition was also a very productive one, and tally vernacular and and it had "a number Italian ramifications" verse *Doctrina d'Art* in- tinguishing.

One would like to be more about the "and circle of Italian literature in Provencal verse" to Marshall presumes high- ten. He is clearly right. Sadunia, for all that, the *Piza* came from Lallans but one may wonder if interests were not the more cosmopolitan and teranean culture than no," gratuitous display profound erudition and sight suggest.

OLD POT seething with dis- satisfactions which fortunately can be relied on never to come well, and two very short pieces in MS Ripoll 12, the same (irritably, allied to a whole gamut of critical theories, not least those raised by the troubadour quotations in the *Razos*), and out steps Voelke's edition of the *Doctrina*, which has faced these 13th-century texts and the investigation of their antecedents. His examination of the manuscript cooperation has descended on the text, but there is evidence that some features of the text do not command a philosophy, especially devotion they did. Many writers who shared practice, educators and others) have been or for which only decided that some approach to the troubadour writing of the account be overlooked (including the recent past) logist concerned with his as a positive encouragement in his field. The history of contemporary writing through the lens of the text and discussion. The examined and the edition for Scottish literary achievements shrewdly, the Lallans Society, Communi closely argued comment, Alan Albannach (the Scottish gives us a definitive edition), and Club Leub-Mr Marshall calls "The Highland Book Club" are dition."

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# The resources of Scotland

BY EDWIN MORGAN

we might well give its opposite a chance.

The feeling that accompanies these remarks—and I know that others share it—is rather like the end of Philip Larkin's "The Whitsun Weddings", a sense of disparate things coming together and (because they are brought together) being released towards a destination. Those who share the feeling would not always agree as to whether the destination is the recovery of a national self-respect (a *natural* self-respect—a national self-credibility, for God's sake!) or something that in the end can only be political, whether devolution or independence. Political in the widest sense it already is, if anything that earnestly concerns the cultural health of a nation is political—and Tom Scott's long, gritty social meditation "Auld Sanct-Andrueus: Brand Solloquies" is neither more nor less concerned than Ian Hamilton Finlay's "The Olsen Excerpts" with its punning double tribute to the Scottish fishing industry and to Charles Olsen and the genius loci. Between two such extremes of literary expression (and Tom Scott would no doubt deny that "The Olsen Excerpts" is even literary) there is scant hobnobbing, yet someone like

Fern Pound would understand both, and how both can be related to the needs of a time and a place.

But the pressure towards something that would be political in the narrower sense is also undeniably present in the general movement I have been outlining. There is not only a very widespread feeling that some sort of devolution is necessary, but there is also, now, the awareness that the constitutional changes which must take place in Ireland, and even in the United Kingdom itself as a result of entry into the Common Market, give the first opportunity for hundreds of years of rethinking the whole constitutional situation. It is significant that when *Lines Review* 37 (June, 1971) was given over completely to an anti-nationalist essay, "The Knitted Claymore", by the poet Alan Jackson, this proved to be rather a damp squib. Those who were attacked replied; but there was no great debate, as there would have been ten years ago. This is not to say that the essay was not useful in launching a few sprightly darts at the ugly, knuckle-rapping, xenophobic side of nationalism (which of course is not peculiar to Scotland), but Alan Jackson pushed his case too far until it began to topple over, and it

was indeed virtually contradicted by some of his own passing parentheses (since he is an honest man). The main effect revealed by the essay, however, was that writers as a whole were no longer eager to join in the false fray of a flying since flying is an art form and not a true agent of change, for all its appearance of violent involvement.

So although it would obviously be untrue to say that "we are all nationalists now", there is nevertheless something approaching a consensus among Scottish writers that what is being produced here—forgetting all the older and perhaps threadbare definitions of "Scottish"—has some value and is worth encouraging, especially by writers being willing to stay and work in their own country. But what guarantee have we got that what we are doing is distinctive and could not have been produced anywhere else? The mature answer would be that there is no such guarantee and that it does not matter: Scottish writers must simply write as well as they can, and leave it to others to decide whether their provenance stands out, and what value it infuses into their work. Unfortunately Scotland is not in a mature state, and that mature answer would still be something of a

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luxury. So long as the political situation remains unhappy, the economic situation unhappy, and the language situation as complex and confused as it is, a Scottish writer will tend to be tugged, kicking against the pricks, as hard as he likes, into at least the but if not the ben of involvement with the whole north-of-the-border ethos problem. Here, bad vibrations abound for many. What do your own thing, in Scotland?

Inner attractional somebody says death and they all come rushing home to agree and look stern and solemn: enter fourteen editors with analysis kits, (Tom McGrath, "Nicotine Withdrawal: Psychotic Rage Poem")

And how to relate yourself to traditions that may seem more like locks than keys?

Let us exorcise the old god of Scotland with his knotted brain and jellyfish eyes who has tormented his children from generation into generation (Tom Buchan, "Exorcism")

And history? What use is history? Is history not the opium of the imagination?

(Eastward Culloden where the sun shone on the feeding eaven. Let it be forgotten!) (Iain Crichton Smith, "The White Air of March")

These quotations may suggest that the contemporary Scottish writer often finds himself saying: Redefine my task; redefine my field of operations; redefine my country.

To a Highlander like Iain Crichton Smith, bilingual in Gaelic and English, and prolific in poetry, novels, short stories, plays, essays and reviews, the problem of definition must always be particularly acute because the national aspirations of (mainly) Lowland Scotland can scarcely be his, because his

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"country" is not only Ghan and Lewis but a country of the mind that stretches from Robert Lowell to Kafka and Dostoevsky, and because his first language, Gaelic, is so obviously in a state of decline that to attempt to extend and modernize its expressive potential (as he has done) and been blamed for it by conservative Gaelic can only seem a paradoxical activity. In one of his Gaelic poems he speaks of himself in the image of a court jester, dressed in motley—"Beurl" is Ghl-dhùil, duth is dearg" (English and Gaelic, black and red)—and fears that in the rainstorms of his anxiety the two colours will run into one and become indistinct and muddy. Yet, although his Gaelic is freely peppered with English words, both in order to produce special effects and also (as he admits) for experiment's sake, he is clear in his mind that such things have to be done and tried, whatever hope or lack of hope there may be for the future of the tongue. As he points out, Gaelic and English are in entirely dissimilar situations, each of which offers its special challenge to a creative writer: "So much has not been done in Gaelic that confronted by such a huge uncharted waste one is tempted to spread one's energies, and to try new things. So much in English has already been done that the situation is different."

Gaelic poetry, then, not only survives but survives strongly, in the work of Iain Crichton Smith, Derick Thomson, George Campbell Hay, Donald MacAulay, and above all, Sorley MacLean. But as Colm Brughan once remarked, "It is no good trying to be the Prout of the Hebrides." The Gaelic have never taken to the novel as a literary form and there are few serious examples of it. Nor is there any Gaelic professional theatre, though many plays have been written for the amateur stage, and Gaelic drama has been produced on television, played somewhat stiffly by amateur actors. Poetry and song can be trusted to survive under the most adverse conditions, and it is the meagre development of the other forms that shows the relative weakness of the Gaelic cultural position on any overall view.

Gaelic writers themselves are not given to making optimistic pronouncements about the future of the language, and the prospect of its ever becoming the national tongue of Scotland is even more remote than that of its sister-languages in Ireland and Wales. Comunn na Canann Albannaich, founded in 1969, is devoted precisely to the implementation of that remote end, and this organization has the brave slogan "Tir gun chànnain, tir gun ànann" (The country without a language is a country without a soul). But what is Scotland's language? Most people would regard the Society's title, Scottish Language Society, as a somewhat high-handed appropriation, since Gaelic looms less large in the Scottish consciousness than Welsh does in Wales. The "Scottish Language", for most Scots who think about the matter, is primarily Lowland Scots, or Scots, or Lallans—it is best called Scots. The Lallans Society, established this year, would have called itself the Scots Language Society but for the naughty preemption of Comunn na Canann Albannaich. There is obviously a place for both groups,

however, and they could even draw of opinion that favours de-Londouization as a general aim. One of the chief objects of the Lallans Society is "to foster and promote the emergence of Lallans as a language". This'll no gang far furrit till mair an mair towe-educatid folk anan kin be persudid the yabbe the leid an no fin it lauchin ower whill's prentir here the- noo, I se tik ye the Race Reli-tious Board, na munnie, an nae bouthier. The trouble is that "Scots" is itself a far from monolithic term, ranging in applicability from the Scottish English that is mainly a matter of accent plus the occasional "scunner" or "outwith", to the varieties of urban and rural Scots which at their raciest (Glasgow, say, or Aberdeenshire) depend on quite a thick complex of non-English speech-habits.

All of these are available to, though underexploited by, the Scottish writer, for both verse and prose. The Scottish writer's dilemma today is that while he might want to keep helping a general literary Scots to develop, whether in the eclectic or "Synthetic Scots" tradition of Hugh MacDiarmid or in some other way, he is on the other hand

strongly urged, by the movement towards not only a spoken poetry (if he happens to be a poet or perhaps a playwright) but also a "sincerity" theory of artistic expression (whether in verse or prose), to write on a basis of the actual language of men. On the whole, the second alternative is in the ascendant among younger poets using Scots (e.g. Donald Campbell and Duncan Glen) or more specifically an urban dialect (Stephen Mulrine, Tom Leonard). Novelists, possibly frustrated by their London publishers who are afraid that glocal stipes, or even bus-stopes, might reduce sales, are disappointingly smooth and untruthful in their dialogue these days, with very few exceptions; it is high time they reconsidered the ear and the tongue. The Glasgow speech in short stories by Alan Spence shows a nice awareness of what is wanted.

There is also a great deadlock to be broken in the theatre, where directors and managers seem to be hypnotized rigid by the polarity of Received Standard versus Costume Scots—neither of which any Scotsman actually speaks. Only rarely do Scottish theatre audiences hear that modest and enforced reflection of their own living speech-habits which an English or Ameri-

can audience takes for granted. Revivals of *Bride of Tiro*, *Stewart's* *I Didn't Always Live Here*, Bill Bryden's *Willie Rough*, recent plays by Joan Ure and Alasdair Gray, and that's about the lot. The small and still struggling Stage Company (Scotland) has been formed to encourage the writing and performing of such plays, and this is a hopeful sign, though it remains to be seen what real impact the company will make. Naturalism is no panacea, and in any case television to some extent takes care of it, but it would be good to have at least one theatre which was devoted to exhibiting and exploring the actual state of life in Scotland. At the same time, an honest observer has to admit that such an alien and unScottish theatre as the Glasgow Citizens' has become under Giles Haverall also has a useful function, a function recognized by its enthusiastic and often young audience, despite unrelenting rifle-fire from Scottish critics. What could be more incongruous than a company who eschew Scottish plays and Scottish actors developing a stunningly physical, spectacular, antiverbalistic theatre on an island of the crumbling half-demolished Gorbals? Stuffy old upright heterosex-

## Glasgow Sonnets by Edwin Morgan

'See a tenement due for demolition?  
I can get ye rooms in it, two, okay?  
Seven hundred and nothin' legal to pay  
for it's no legal, see? That's my proposition,  
ye can take it or leave it but. The position  
is simple, ye want a house, I say  
for eight hundred pound it's yours.' And they,  
trailing five bairns, accepted his omission  
of the foul crumbling stairwell, windows wired  
not glazed, the damp from the canal, the cooker  
without pipes, packs of rats that never tired—  
any more than the vandals bored with snicker  
who stripped the neighbouring houses, howled, and fired  
their aerosols—of squeaking 'Filthy lucre!'

Down by the brickworks ye get warm at least.  
Surely soup-kitchens have gone out? It's not  
the Thirties now. Hugh MacDiarmid forgot  
in 'Glasgow 1960' that the feast  
of reason and the flow of soul has ceased  
to matter to the long unfinished plot  
of heating frozen hands. We never got  
an abstruse song that charmed the raging beast.  
So ye have nothing to lose but your chains,  
dear Seventies. Dalmarloch, Maryhill,  
Blackhill and Govan, better sticks and stanzas  
should break your bairns, for poets' words are ill  
to hurt ye. On the wrecker's ball the rains  
of greeting cities drop and drink their fill.

Environmentalists, ecologists  
and conservationists are fine no doubt.  
Pedestrianization will come out  
fighting, riverside walks march off the lists,  
pigeons and starlings be somnambulist  
in far-off suburbs, the sandblaster's grout  
multiply pink plebeian facades to pout  
at sticky-fingered mock-Venerianists.  
Prop up's the motto. Splint the dying age.  
Never displace the watchers from the grave,  
Great when fake architecture was the rage,  
but greater still to see what you can save.  
The gutted double fake meets the adage:  
a wig's the thing to beat both beard and shave.

Meanwhile the flyovers breed loops of light  
in curves that would have ravished tragic Toshi—  
clean and unponymous, nothing wish-washy.  
Visitas swim out from the bulldozer's bite  
by day, and banks of earbound stars at night  
begin. In Madam Eme's Saucy Haugh, she  
could never gain in leaves or larks or sploshy  
lunes what's lost in a dead boarded site  
the life that overspill is overkill to.  
Lew's not more, and garden cities are  
the flimsiest oxymoron to distil to.  
And who wants to distil? Let bus and car  
and hurrying umbrellas keep their skill to  
feed ukijo e beyond Lochmarg.

It groans and shakes, contracts and grows again.  
Its giant broken shoulders shrug off rain.  
It digs its pit to a shuffling refrain.  
Roadworks and graveyards like their gallus men.  
It fattens fires and murders in a pen  
and lets them out in flaps and squalls of pain.  
It sometimes tears its smoky counterpane  
to hoist a bleary list at nothing, then  
at everything, ye never know. The west  
could still be laid with no one's tears like dust  
and barricaded windows be the best  
to see from till the shops, the ships, the trust  
return like thunder. Give the Clyde the rest.  
Man and the sea make cities as they must.

From thirtieth-floor windows at Red Road  
he can see snuggles and samphires, dreadful trade—  
the schoolboy reading *Leah* has that scene made.  
A mulh is a sonnet stretched to ode  
and some say that's no joke. The gentle haid  
of souls in clouds, vertiginously stayed  
above the windy courts, is probed and weighed.  
Each monolith stands patient, ah'd and oh'd.  
And stalled life generating high-rise blues  
can be set loose. But stalled lives never budge.  
They linger in the single-ends that use  
their spirit to the bone, and when they trudge  
from closemouth to laundrette their steady shoes  
carry a world that weighs us like a judge.

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# The hordes and their homeland

## BERTOLD SPULER:

### History of the Mongols

Translated by Helga and Stuart Drummond  
221pp £3.

## J. I. SAUNDERS:

### The History of the Mongol Conquests

275pp £3.15.  
Routledge and Kegan Paul.

There are now two levels in the study of the history of Mongolia and the conditions and problems of the Mongols today. One is represented by studies like those of Bertold Spuler and J. I. Saunders (which in turn represent different levels of scholarship and popularization). The other is represented by the work of scholars in Mongolia itself, which has accumulated in quantity and improved in quality at a high rate of intensity in the postwar years. To the work of the Mongol scholars one must add the strong supplement (and often inspiration) of work done by Western Marxist scholars, most notably in the Soviet Union but also in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. One must also add the work of a writer quoted as follows, which must remain an exception in its interpretations (for she "could not be taken into account in the career of Chinggis Khan") but is nevertheless a valuable contribution: "What is most needed now, and is not provided by either of the books under review, is a major effort—to combine the findings of Marxist and non-Marxist scholars. For this we shall have to look first of all to non-Marxist scholars, who

can already use and discuss the findings of Marxist scholars with considerable tolerance—after all, concepts like the formation of the social and historical substructure by the mode of production, and the shaping of the superstructure by the relations of production and class conflict, are now generally accepted—while Marxist scholars cannot yet be as tolerant in handling the publications of their non-Marxist colleagues. Valiant beginnings have been made in this direction in West Germany by Walther Heissig, a sample of whose work is available in English translation as *A Lost Civilization: The Mongols Rediscovered* (1966) and in this country by C. R. Bawden's *The Modern History of Mongolia* (strong on the medieval, much weaker on the recent and contemporary), and by A. J. K. Saunders' *The People's Republic of Mongolia* (the best guide to the country and the people of Mongolia today). It is still true, however, that to understand the past as a pattern of processes leading up to the societies and situations of today we need not two or three but a considerable number of historians who can read in quantity today's interpretations of Mongolian history by Mongol historians.

In the meantime, Professor Spuler's *History of the Mongols* applies traditional methods in a refreshingly novel way. Instead of reproducing once more one of the well-known texts and adding new footnotes to it, he selects excerpts from a number of sources and arranges them by a combination of chronology and topic. Thus in Section 1, "The founding of the Empire: Chinggis Khan and his immediate successors", the source

from subsection 1, "The youth of Chinggis Khan", to subsection 8, "One of the most important generals", is the *Secret History of the Mongols*. Subsection 9, "Chinggis Khan: Ruler by the grace of God", contains one paragraph from Juwaini and two from Monneret de Villard's account of the travels of Brother Ricoldo da Montecore. Then, for the next three subsections—"The structure of the army", "Honouring the Old", "Bodyguards"—the source is once more the *Secret History*, but not consecutive paragraphs of that source. The next source quoted—subsection 13, "The Mongol invasion and the Muslims"—is Ibn al-Athir; and so on.

By this method, when it is time to introduce a particular topic, the most detailed or the most vivid source may be cited, without writing a composite account, burdened with complex footnotes and cross-references. A legitimate complaint, however, is that while this compilation is attributed to "Eastern and Western accounts", not a single Chinese source is drawn on, though many are available, including notably Arthur Waley's *The Travels of an Alchemist*, translating the account of the journey of Chang Ch'un.

There is one curious error for so good a scholar as Professor Spuler: the flat statement that "China" comes from the name of the Kin (or Chin) dynasty of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries AD. It is generally considered that "China" comes in fact from the name of the Ch'in dynasty, which first unified China in the third century BC.

Mr Saunders' history of the Mongol conquest follows older pre-

cedents but does not add much that is new, though it has a useful bibliography for the reader who wants to start his own general reading. It begins with an unsatisfactory geographical sketch, in which it is said that the Yenisei and Lena flow into Lake Baikal, and that "the heart of the Steppe country has always been the pastures along the northern edge of the Altai". There is also mention of a land or region called "Kirghiz", presumably Kazakhstan, which perpetuates the pre-revolutionary Russian confusion (now cleared up) between Karakhs and Kirghiz.

There follows a rapid, inadequate survey of pre-Mongol Turkish history in Mongolia. Here we find the statement that the poor old Turks learnt to write, but that "the Chinese ideograms were indeed beyond their needs or capacities". No people (including Europeans), ever lacked the "capacity" to learn Chinese ideograms. The much more intriguing historical truth is that one after another many northern tribes, either after invading China or while resisting the extension of Chinese control, adopted or invented non-Chinese systems of writing in the class-conscious effort to protect their own ruling elite from being culturally captured by Chinese administrators and scribes.

Passing on to the early Mongols, we are informed that "they followed the life of hunters and stock-raisers; indeed they had no choice, since the land is, or rather was, unsuited for agriculture or mining". Here the curious distinction between the present and past is not explained: but the truth is that in Mongolia both agriculture (including skillfully engineered irrigated agriculture) and mining have been intermittent, though

not everywhere continuous from the Stone Age onwards. The difficulty has always been that those who settled down to grow enough grain to provide a surplus for the feeding of towns were vulnerable to attack by those who continued to rely on their cattle and their military mobility.

In the main body of the book the chronological narrative is clear and well-told; the rise of Chinggis to the latest official Mongol spelling; his conquests; the organization of the Mongolian empire, or group of empires; the impact on the Christian West; the rather rapid decline and fall. The interpretation, however, is throughout conventional. Mongols and Turks and others are always "the" Mongols, "the" Turks, and so on. The interaction, which is often complicated but can always be clearly analysed, of ruling classes (not just peoples), and exploited classes (who are also not just peoples), is more convincing, as well as more interesting, than the conventional contrast drawn between savage but somehow noble nomads and civilized but somehow debilitated societies based on passive peasants.

In short, we need a new generation of scholars who will take up the obvious challenge. On the Marxist side the conventions have become as stale as those of the non-Marxist. For them, everything has been reduced to a dull level of "feudalism" which fails to account satisfactorily for the way in which pre-feudal societies have built up, or evolved, into the full feudal phase and then broken down, or devolved, back to a pre-feudal or proto-feudal level. What we should ask from a new generation of historians is an adequate explanation of the alternation of rise and fall.

## To the east of the Caspian Sea

### J. MASSON and E. BARIANIDI:

#### Central Asia

Translated and edited by Ruth S. Pines  
9pp including 53 photographs.  
James and Hudson. £3.50.

### OGAR KNOBLOCH:

Beyond the Oxus  
9pp including 134 illustrations.  
Penguin. £2.90.

Throughout history Central Asia has been a melting-pot of cultures, subject to influences from Western Asia, Persia, India and China. This, too, with its topography of scattered oases, separated by steppe and desert, has denied it a cultural unity and made it a cultural development unduly peripheral, without a centre. Systematic archaeological exploration of Central Asia is a fairly recent phenomenon, and has been mainly undertaken largely by Russian scholars. As a consequence, the area almost totally unknown in the past, except to those with access to Russian sources.

Central Asia surveys the cultural development of Turkmenia—the land east of the Caspian Sea—from prehistoric times to the early Iron

Age. The authors are themselves responsible for many of the excavations which have made such a book possible, and it is a fitting tribute to their work, and to Russian archaeology as a whole. Perhaps the most interesting sections are those dealing with the growth of neolithic and proto-urban settlements. In the earlier stages south-western Turkmenia was more advanced than the northern and eastern regions, and was clearly a cultural offshoot of Western Asia. Urban development appears to have followed the pattern known from northern Mesopotamia, where it was later, and less original, than that of the great riverine civilizations of Sumer and Egypt.

It appears, too, that this growth was arrested in the mid-second millennium BC, when it was still in a formative phase. This premature decline, which saw the abandonment of cities and the spread of agriculture to hitherto undeveloped areas, remains a mystery. At a time contemporary with these developments in the southern region, the northern areas of Central Asia were inhabited by the nomadic, cattle-breeding tribes of the Steppe Bronze Age—tribes which played a crucial role in the genesis of Scythic culture. The extent of trade with the Harappan and other areas of higher civilization

is assessed, as is its importance in the urbanization process. According to the authors, it is this trade with the Indus valley which accounts for the location of the Mundigak trading-post in southern Afghanistan.

Since this is the only full-length study of its kind in English, it will clearly be a useful book for the student, but the general reader is likely to be put off by its sombre, not to say pedestrian, style of exposition. At times, this becomes too convoluted for comfort. We are told, for example, that "the incipient ethno-cultural independence of southern Turkmenia in the central and southern regions was already established earlier, in the period of Namazga II". At other times, assumptions are made which are not substantiated, and have rather the flavour of dogma. Thus, collective burials in the Geoksyurk period imply a society based on clan kinship, while the development of urban civilization "put paid to the primitive social order of equality". There is a corresponding tendency to exaggerate the cultural attainments of the pre-urban settlements, in which there was no property inequality, where "rapid economic progress and the associated improvement in the social life of the community stimulated the development

of culture and the arts", and where, no doubt, each peasant was his own philosopher. Otherwise, the authors succeed admirably in conveying an enormous amount of information in a clear and straightforward manner.

Edgar Knobloch's approach to Central Asian archaeology is different, and more ambitious: he takes us on an extended tour through time, pointing out as we go—"we have just enough time to glimpse them as they pass"—both the transient and the permanent features of the region's development. Of course, the book is intended as a guide for the potential traveller in Central Asia, and not for the scholar, and Mr Knobloch accepts "in advance any reproach of superficiality and incompleteness"—and, one might add, of inaccuracy, for it is almost inevitable in a work of this scope.

The first part is a highly condensed account of the history and civilization of Central Asia, up to its annexation by the Russian Empire, forming the background against which the sites and monuments, described in the second part, are to be viewed. These are profusely illustrated in black-and-white, but the photographs are of varied quality, and no indication of the

actual size of objects is provided. Despite its limitations, however, this book would be a welcome and instructive companion on the Golden Road to Samarkand.

*Gates to Asia* by Jan Myrdal, translated by Paul Britten Austin (240pp, Chatto and Windus, £3) is a glib, almost quixotic book. The tragedy of the "developing" countries in Asia, Mr Myrdal feels, is that the rich are growing richer and the poor poorer, while power is passing to a new bureaucratic bourgeoisie of the kind that he hates. His comments upon those who control Soviet policy in such places as Turkmenistan are just as severe as those of British rule in India. His real enthusiasm is reserved for the Afghan people, whose determination to resist British control in past times he admires unstintingly, even to the extent of accepting, quite uncritically, from the historical standpoint, their national legends. Despite the justifiable critical comment it is impossible to withhold admiration from Mr Myrdal and his wife for their dauntless explorations. Gun Kessle's pictures are beyond praise as presentations of traditional ways of life which she and her husband have explored so sympathetically.

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## Denington Estate, WELLINGBOROUGH, U.K.

structure of the English parish. For the modern townsman all villages may seem basically alike, but historically speaking nothing is further from the truth. In the mid-Victorian era, owing to the existence of sources not available in earlier centuries, such as the *Return of Owners of Land, 1873*, these differences may be plotted on a national scale. Despite vast changes in land ownership, it is clear that throughout England there were still thousands of small freeholders clinging on to their land, though probably far fewer than in previous centuries. In Leicestershire, for example, the *Return* records more than 4,000 small freeholders in the county, owning between one acre and 300 acres apiece. In Kent there were nearly 7,000 smallholders and in Lancashire more than 12,000.

Within this general pattern it is also clear that most rural places belonged to one or other of two essentially distinct types of community: the "manorial parish", in which all the land was owned by a single magnate or a few large landowners, and the "freeholders' parish", in which land was subdivided among a multiplicity of smallholders. This division oversimplifies a complex situation, but for the present article it must suffice. It is a division which was evident in all parts of England, but there were striking regional differences in the predominance of one or other type of community.

In Leicestershire, for example, a little over half the county consisted of estate parishes, controlled by landed magnates, whereas 48 per cent consisted of parishes where small freeholders predominated. In Northamptonshire, a county which had long been noted for its great estates, two-thirds of the shire was in the hands of magnates and only one-third in those of small freeholders. At the other end of the spectrum was the county of Kent, where almost two-thirds of the shire was in the hands of small owners and only one-third belonged to the grandes. In much of Kent the freeholder, or yeoman, was still a characteristic figure: the word "yeoman" was still current there in the mid-nineteenth century whereas in Northamptonshire it had become virtually extinct by 1780.

Yet in the case of Kent this generalization conceals the most significant feature—the regional differences within the county. Kent is a shire sharply divided, both geographically and historically, into distinct areas, and the pattern of landownership varied greatly between them. The Weald has always been thought of as the stronghold of the "yeomen of Kent", and on the whole the nineteenth-century evidence bears out the legend. Although there were several ancient parks and manors in the Weald, such as Penshurst and Hever, in four out of five Wealden parishes small freeholders still formed the dominant element. In downland parishes, by contrast, 70 per cent of the land was in the hands of the local squires, and only 30 per cent in the hands of small freeholders. In this great arc of countryside, stretching seventy miles from the Surrey border to the cliffs of Dover and covering several hundred thousand acres, landed families were even more powerful, their rule even more entrenched, than in Northamptonshire. On the whole they were an ancient aristocracy, often tracing their ancestry back to the fourteenth or fifteenth century. In many a downland parish one can still sense their local dominion, where church and manor house stand side by side, with no other building in sight, and the family tombs bear witness to generations of manorial pride.

In Kent, and doubtless elsewhere, distinctions of this kind between regions of estate parishes and regions of freeholders' parishes can be traced back for centuries. In many cases to the origins of English society. The settlement of the Weald and the downland had occurred at different periods. In different ways, and under different auspices; its distinctive features in the Victorian age had a very long history behind them, and their power of survival was remarkable.

These two different types of

parish, the manorial and the freeholding, necessarily threw up different types of society. Clearly the latter was the freer and more independent, and one of the ways in which it expressed this freedom was in its predilection for Nonconformity. Dissent is often thought of as an essentially urban phenomenon in England, but the Religious Census of 1851, when Nonconformity was approaching the peak of its power, shows that this view is mistaken. The census proved not only that Dissent was an essentially provincial phenomenon (the proportion of Nonconformists in London was a good deal smaller than in major provincial towns) but that it was often quite as strong in the countryside as in the towns. In the Lindsey division of Lincolnshire (the northern half of the county), nearly two-thirds of the 550 Dissenting chapels in the area were to be found in rural parishes, and little more than a third in the towns. In Leicestershire, though a markedly more urban and industrial county, more than two-thirds of the 354 Dissenting chapels were in country parishes. In Kent, it is true, the position was reversed, and nearly two-thirds of the 500 chapels in the county were to be found in the towns. Yet in all three areas at least three-quarters of the Dissenting groups in the countryside were to be found in freeholders' parishes; whereas in 80 per cent of the estate parishes, or wherever squire and parson were dominant, there was no organized Nonconformity of any kind.

Differences in local settlement patterns, in rural economies, in industrial origins, in parish typologies: these do not exhaust the historical diversity of provincial society. They are enough to suggest, however, that whereas we normally think of England as a single community, a unitary society, it is also legitimate to think of it as an amalgam of different societies all at varying stages in their evolution, all influencing each other, yet all developing in their own way, moving forward at different periods and at different paces, so that one finds older societies co-existing, often with equal vigour, alongside the new. Perhaps the vital spark of originality in England has often arisen from the collision of these differing worlds.

Normally, for example, we think of Victorian England as predominantly an industrial society: the land of Manchester and Birmingham. Well, of course, it was the land of Birmingham and Manchester. Yet if one studies almost any Victorian county or region in the round, and examines the occupations, for example, of all its inhabitants, one finds a less simple but more interesting picture. The county of Kent in the 1860s will serve as an illustration. It was not a typical shire—no county can be yet the variety of societies within it was characteristic of almost every part of England. If we exclude the London suburban region (which contained about 30 per cent of the population), its area covered rather more than a million acres, its population amounted to 545,000, and the occupied population to almost 300,000. (The last figure may be compared with Devonshire's 330,000 and Lancashire's 1,350,000.) Of this 300,000, nearly 65,000 were in industrial occupations; 55,000 in agricultural, and 30,000 in professional. (Compare Devonshire's 90,000, 64,000 and 24,000; Lancashire's 620,000, 85,000 and nearly 30,000.) Though Kent was obviously far less industrial than Lancashire, there was an important industrial community of a kind in the county, existing alongside the agricultural and the professional. Although there were no large towns, there were many of about 6,000 to 30,000 inhabitants; and there was a great deal of small-scale industry in these places, as there was in similar towns all over England.

Equally important, within and beyond this industrial society, the fundamental craft culture of the county also survived. During the latter half of the eighteenth century the population of Kent had almost doubled; and during the next half-century or so it doubled again. As a consequence many traditional occupations that were still basic to a

largely agrarian economy had survived but expanded. In 1871, for example, there were at least 1,200 saddler's shops, 640 shoemaker's workshops, 120 master millers, and 115 brewer's shops. (The vice of good fellowship, Charendon sourly remarked in the seventeenth century, was not spread over that unhappy county. Taken together, these occupations and others like them provide an example of what W. G. Hoskins once conveniently christened "Old Community". Several of the occupations in Kent were among the largest in the county. Almost ever one looks in Victorian England one finds evidence of this traditional society, living in juxtaposition to the newer world of industry. In essence, not as a decaying relic, but as a self-conscious revival, but still an older society with a different cycle alongside the new industrial world, explains much in the future, the art, the philosophy, and idealism of Victorian England. It did not need to travel far to find a morning's walk from the large city and you were in the middle of And on market day in a town like Leicester or Preston, with all its hundreds of village carriages streaming in from the countryside, passed by your very doorstep, you conversed with it in the inn.

The most important element in this traditional world, so far as it was concerned, was the local families of the shire, and they deserve separate comment. Concerning their economic importance, their prominence in the writings of Victorian authors like George Eliot, Richard Jefferies, and Thomas Hardy, the farming families of Kent have received scant attention from historians. In the county Kent there were at least 4,500 them in 1870 and, apart from labourers and domestic servants, they formed much the largest occupational group in the shire. Their most striking characteristics of their intense localism and their strong dynastic connections. The features were probably more strongly developed in Kent than in many counties; yet they were present among the farming families of most shires in greater or lesser degrees. Certainly they were not in counties like Devon and Cornwall, and they also obtained, in minor degree, in small inland counties like Leicestershire.

In the case of Kent these yeoman families, like the gentry of the shire in the Stuart period, whom many of them descended, were almost always divided into numerous branches, many of which were concentrated in a group of neighbouring parishes, all of them much related to

another by marriage. The descendants of Augustine Cobb of Elverton, near Faversham, for example, died in 1745—had by 1870 married into at least eleven other local families: Neames, Austens, Hammonds, Lukes, Comforts, Wildshires, Wises, Riches, and Mailes. Into many of these families they had married more than once, and if the pedigrees of all Augustine Cobb's descendants could be traced the number would be much greater.

If one belonged to one of these families in the 1870s one would have found oneself part of an extensive local cousinage, with at least twenty or thirty other branches in Kent, and few or no branches elsewhere. Not all these branches would have been headed by farmers: at one end of the scale they tailed off

Chittendens, the twenty-three of the Blaxlands, and the sixteen of the Kingsnorths. One of the most numerous of all Kentish farming dynasties was the Hogbans—another purely local surname, still common in the area, meaning "crooked leg"—whose seventy-two branches seem to have been entirely confined to Kent, nineteen of them being farmers and fifty local tradesmen.

Many of these families were confined not only to Kent but to a small group of neighbouring parishes within it. Of the Blaxlands, for instance, all but one of the nine farming branches were to be found in a group of five neighbouring parishes near Faversham, and all but four of the remaining fifteen in the same countryside. As their local church monuments indicate, this had long been their homeland, certainly

power and cohesion of the indulgent forces in the farming community of the shire were remarkable. At this level the old proverb, "in Kent they are all first cousins", still contained an element of truth.

It is also evident that, when these families left the land and entered trades or professions, they remained almost exclusively within their native county. By 1870, although three-quarters of their 4,500 branches had abandoned a direct interest in farming, only about five per cent had migrated to the metropolis in search of a living. About a third had remained in the rural parishes of the county, either as local craftsmen or as "village gentry", while 60 per cent migrated to local towns like Canterbury, Ashford, and Maidstone, where they became manufacturers, tradesmen, craftsmen, or professional people.

The study of surnames in this way, for its illumination of population movements, family patterns, and the structure of local society, is unaccountably neglected in England. There are many books on the meaning of surnames; there are few indeed on the more important topic of their historical distribution. For this reason some of the recent findings of the English Surnames Survey, established at Leicester University by the Maro Fitch Foundation six years ago, are proving of great interest. From a study of the distribution patterns of several thousand East Anglian surnames, for example, Richard McKimley has established that there was a good deal more migration into this and other areas in the medieval and Tudor period than one might suppose, some of it from as far away as the remote Pennines.

We need not try to reconcile this kind of mobility among medieval populations with what appears to be a remarkably static element amongst the farming population in the nineteenth century. At this level we know too little as yet of either society, in either period, to make valid generalizations. Probably the fabric of English society has always displayed a texture of intense localism shot through with vivid threads of change. It also seems probable that at the heart of most local societies a core or cousinage of dominant families tends to develop and to exert an influence out of proportion to its numbers, forming a focus of local loyalty and in some sense counterbalancing the effects of immigration. Certainly this development occurred in a striking manner within the county society of Stuart Kent, and it was also apparent in the urban society of Hanoverian Northampton.

Yet there are reasons for thinking that in several respects regional cultures may have been striking deeper roots in England between Charles I's reign and Queen Victoria's. There is evidence for this supposition, for example, in the marked decline of long-distance migration, coupled with the increase of local migration, into Midland towns like Northampton after 1660. It may also be traced in the rise of industrial regions—one might almost say industrial capitals—which gradually developed a rival culture of their own in this period to the culture of the metropolis. It can be seen, moreover, in the concentration of certain industries in distinct areas, and in the local pool of specialist skills that came to form as a consequence in towns like Sheffield and Nottingham. We can trace an important if forgotten aspect of it in the establishment after 1700 of influential provincial newspapers like the *Northampton Mercury*. And it may also be traced, very distinctly, in the dramatic expansion of provincial Nonconformity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the pronounced regional connections of some of the sects. Developments like these, I suggest, tended to anchor the mind of the local community more firmly in its region. They go some way towards explaining the deeply-rooted regional cultures portrayed in the novels of George Eliot and Arnold Bennett.

Alan Everitt is Professor of English Local History at the University of Leicester.

## Oxford

My footfalls hardly sag the eroded stair.  
Through a strait gate the garden of the Fellows.  
The awesome line of tenants of the Chair,  
March's male sparrows black-faced as Othellos.

The coloured scutcheons of the founding earls  
Dim libraries of brown or golden hair.  
The dreams of dons are dwarfs and little girls.  
My breath augments the whited valley air.

Should time condemn the passionate to be  
Oblates of culture in culture's disrepair,  
Here will they raise the mocking effigy  
Of emperors who deployed the ironware.

If lions may be said to live in yellows  
That hue pervades the fenestrated twirls.  
Youth's blood flows through the strangled artery  
And knowledge tries to fascinate the fair.

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# Detestable Italians and determined admirers

HAROLD L. SHAPIRO (Editor):

Ruskin in Italy  
Letters to his Parents 1845.  
263pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £6.

VIRGINIA SURTEES (Editor):  
Sublime & Instructive

Letters from John Ruskin to Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford, Anna Blunden and Ellen Heaton.  
272pp. Michael Joseph, £6.

These two collections of letters show us Ruskin as a young man and in early middle life. In 1845, at the age of twenty-six, he took his first journey abroad without his parents and spent seven months mainly in Italy. The tour established his lasting concern with the religious painting of that country and with Italian romantic and Gothic architecture; and it may also have favoured the beginnings of his social criticism.

A delighted sense of discovery animates the letters that he wrote to his parents almost daily. He so rejoiced, for example, in the unexpected audacity of Titian's portrait of a "beach & laugh". At the same time, he repeatedly laments the decay that he observes: "Everything architectural is tumbling to pieces, and everything artistic fading away." The men who allow this to occur, and then obliterate the remains by what purports to be restoration, provoke his anger and disgust. "Take them all in all, I detest these Italians beyond measure." They are "fit for nothing else on earth but to be made surgeons' subjects of."

His letters describe his efforts, principally in Lucca, Pisa, Florence, and Venice, to make some kind of record of the numerous works he sees perishing. That new and "most

blessed invention", the daguerreotype, offers assistance which he is prompt to accept. Other letters express his appreciation of natural scenery in the mountains, where his comments on the Italians grow temporarily less savage. Meanwhile, his parents' letters keep him on his best behaviour. "I will take great care, shall climb very little, & go on no glaciers except the high ones which are perfectly safe." Nor may he relax when studying works of art in the cities. "I am very cautious about ladders, and always try their steps thoroughly, and hold well with hands."

Harold L. Shapiro believes that we can discern the beginnings of Ruskin's social criticism in his record of this tour. Admittedly, we can find him asking himself "whether it were at all proper" in him to have the things he enjoys all to himself; and he is reading Simond's with interest. But the "observations of men and manners" claimed by his editor are less evident than are the observations of pictures and buildings. The offences of the Italians against these works rob them of his sympathy to such a degree that he scarcely recognizes them as human beings at all.

This rather arrogantly detached connoisseur did of course develop into a formidable social critic. But his social criticism does not seem to have sprung from what George Eliot would have called a habit of direct feeling with individual fellow-men; it consists characteristically of eloquent and impassioned assertions of moral principles. To say this is not to question either the sincerity or the worth of the writings that profoundly influenced him as different as Tolstoy and Gandhi; it is simply to suggest the source of their power.

Ruskin's relative incapacity for direct fellow-feeling shows very clearly in *Sublime & Instructive*, a

collection of the letters that he wrote to three female correspondents between 1853 and 1875. He seems even to confess to it when he writes to one of them, "I am quite unable to understand the movements of individual minds." The three women were very different from one another. The beautiful and pious Louisa Waterford had considerable talent as a painter and sought the guidance of the eminent art-critic in developing it. The plebeian Anna Blunden had talent, too, but her deeper motive in pursuing Ruskin was that she had fallen hopelessly in love with him. Ellen Heaton, on the other hand, a well-to-do eccentric who had already thrust herself upon the drawings and others, wanted him to advise her on her purchases of pictures.

In each relationship, Ruskin could behave in a thoroughly schoolmasterly fashion, though much less so with Ellen Heaton than with the

others. Virginia Surtees plausibly conjectures that, when Anna Blunden became so importunate that he might legitimately have terminated their slight acquaintance, his urge to teach induced him to prolong it. He lectures Lady Waterford with unfeeling severity, first as an aristocrat, and secondly as one who has not put her talent to the best use:

The strange mixture of modesty and pride: the great power, shrewdly and narrowly limited: the kind feelings—harmonized with a consistent and conscientious selfishness—above all the terrible polish, which never lets one see whether the light comes from within, or is only reflected; and perhaps most of all, the deadness in every soul and touching source of delight, which is the necessary consequence of loving pleasure too constantly and variously at command—all these things hinder me from speaking to you in the least as I should to a woman of the middle or lower classes. . . . [Your] sketches only show the power of doing what is

right—they never do it. . . . You have played with your great power, thrown them all down like toys at children to laugh at—children—of young—you make me profoundly sorrowful when I think of you.

Both collections, the one showing the young Ruskin on his travels, the other the middle-aged Ruskin among the middle-aged, are now published for the first time. The editor serves us well. The letters are helpfully introduced and illuminated by well-chosen illustrations.

It, and of the new Century Guild founded by Mackintosh and his friends with its total approach to design and their new artistic periodical *Hobbs House*. Ten years later Baillie Scott's own designs for houses and their furnishings, in the spirit of this vision of a whole environment, were being published in the *Studio*. Ten years after that, on publishing a book of his own work in 1906, he could look back on a decade when he himself became an influence, on the Continent and in America as well as in the British Isles. Because he subsequently failed to enrol his own version of the vernacular in the march of the Modern Movement, he is remembered by those who have heard of him at all only as a man who built earth-hugging white houses, quarter-timbered, with hearths on the shutters and copper hoods over the hearths, in deepest Surrey.

There was more to Baillie Scott than that, and this book gives just about all of it. The value of this contribution to our knowledge of the period 1880-1940 would be more immediately visible if the rather parochial contents page listed subsections as well as chapters (what-ever layout designers think, contents pages are for conveying information). Subsections unhinted at include wide-ranging surveys of Arts and Crafts in Europe and America at the height of their awareness of Baillie Scott's best work, and these, taken between the valuable essay on the 1880s and the stimulating final chapter on "Romantic and Modern Architecture", can be read as a survey of the Arts and Crafts Movement in general, as promised in the book's title. Baillie Scott was one of the pioneers, in the Pevsnerian sense, or Proto-Moderns as James D. Kornwolf decides to call them; the architects of that most fruitful time, 1890-1914, of the recasting of domestic architecture inside and out. It is a premise of the book that the early work of Baillie Scott, with its elegant austerity and organic planning, influenced Frank Lloyd Wright and others in America around 1900. His own purest and most mature work was done by 1907. A revelation waits for those dimly aware only of his Home Counties traditional work between the wars, in his early designs for furniture and decoration. The influence upon him of Voysey and the parallel elegance of Mackintosh were of international interest at the turn of the century and after.

Baillie Scott's career is a perfect example of the wide-ranging influence of late-Victorian illustrated periodicals. It was through the pages of the *Studio* and *Building News* that his work became known at home and abroad. Another trend of the time that fitted him perfectly was the growing vogue for the small artistic house, an ideal going back to Philip Webb's Red House for William Morris and surely including E. W. Godwin's White House for

Whistler. It is rather odd, in study that defines the position almost everybody else engaged in house design after the mid-century, and especially those concerned with all-in house-and-furnishings design that there is no mention of Godwin; he died the year Baillie Scott entered the designing world, but prolific designs for artists' houses and for furniture had appeared periodicals still lying around.

The author has dropped one clanger, with overtones of the present state of Victorian design. Where Baillie Scott, in an article in the *Studio* in 1896, was quoted as saying "the well-to-do 'haunt of ancient Peace' is from 'The Palace of Art'", Kornwolf gives the lines to William Morris's *A Dream of John Ball* which he earlier on supposes to be a poem, quoting part of Morris's eighth chapter as verbatim because Baillie Scott is vague way did so somewhere. This point this out may not be just a reviewer's whippersnapper; some times Dr Kornwolf returns to the importance of *A Dream of John Ball* as an influence upon Baillie Scott's thinking, and indeed it is published just at the impressionist outset of his student years. Yet historians don't always know the Tennyson, and non-literary specialists sometimes fail to go back to originals when their heroes' words often ignore specific circumstances altogether, and how Tennyson scholars know Norman Shaw or have ever heard Baillie Scott?

This book will ensure that architectural historians have heard him in his full art-historical context. The book has been given full and lively treatment: "1897-1899" by margins, deep footnotes; but the thesis-aure of building analysis mitigated by the sure-footed observations of the whole. The author obtained his grasp of the past through long dusty hours spent in English, American, and European periodicals; there is no other way this sort of comprehension. Periodicals, flowering then as never before, reveal not only a period's thought but its language. The book has value only because its central figure is fully defined for the first time also because it is a whole period brought to a whole period that is also. If some of it is plodding, Le Corbusier's way, some of it is and we are still at the fork in the road.

*Baillie and the Nineteenth Century* (399pp: Leicester University Press, £6) is a festschrift for Robert Hunt, himself best known for work on Baillie. The other half of the book, *From Constant to Zola*, is a line-up of contributors to a new one, and the collection is edited by D. G. Charlton, Jean Claudon, and Anthony R. Pugh.

MUSIC

## The part of the pianist

DAVID BARNETT:

*The Performance of Music*  
A Study in Terms of the Pianoforte.  
222pp. Barrie and Jenkins, £4.

WILLIAM S. NEWMAN:  
*Performance Practices in Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*  
100pp. Dent, £2.50.

Musical performance remains a perennial and controversial subject, though the layman may well wonder how and why so many books continue to be written about it. Is there anything more to be said, for example, about the interpretation of the Beethoven piano sonatas? We have our authentic editions, free from the dross of nineteenth-century interference and in some cases backed up by facsimiles of autographs and sketches. We may assume that the serious performer of them has technique, knowledge and integrity; as well as the more elusive qualities of "artistic perception" and the ability to captivate the listener. Performances of the same work will still differ vastly. No two artists have the same combination of qualities, and no one artist will play the same twice—except through the illusion of a recording.

Most would not wish it otherwise: the whole art of performance as we have known it, with its triumphs and its perils, is essentially human. All too human, perhaps, in some cases. Knowledge and integrity do not guarantee a magic touch, a fiery temperament, or a heaven-sent voice, and many world-famous names have pride themselves on their instinct and remained aloof from so-called musical dogma. Has the performer in fact become too much a law unto himself, abetted by public adulation? The virtuoso pianist in particular, through his very independence, has tended to monopolize musical glory. In the Romantic age, as Harold Schonberg

reminded us in *The Great Pianists*, his monomania was accepted as "part of the current style". Although pianism maintains its allure, the performer's status has long been questioned. Fifty years ago Paderewski was praised by the American critic Richard Aldrich for having "tugged irresistibly at the heart-strings of a whole people", but by 1949 Paul Hindemith could describe the performer in general as "an inevitable necessity in spite of his basic dubiousness".

These two recent books investigate the role and responsibility of the pianist. Both writers are professors at American universities. William Newman, from North Carolina, is a Beethoven specialist and he concentrates on the problems of style and authenticity in the sonatas. David Barnett, from Bridgeport, explores the whole nature of performance in a more general sense. He does not ignore the listener's role and sees him as part of a musical trinity.

Unlike the Trinity of Christianity, it has not been closely studied as a concept. Yet, due to a curious, paradoxical circumstance, it is extremely subtle and complicated. The three members seem to act independently while each must certainly be keeping the others in mind.

There are some, no doubt, who would question this supposed equality, yet the idea of a trinity presumably still holds good even when a composer plays his own music to himself. There are three factors involved—creation, transmission and reception—and they will continue to be analysable as such in a scientific world if we imagine, to quote Dr Barnett, "something called music being transmitted by computers to electrodes that have been attached to the listener".

Dr Barnett is, however, mainly concerned with the heritage of the past, though he welcomes electronic methods as a means of analysing phrasing and intensity in a performance of Chopin's *Berceuse* and of the "artistic deviation" in four different organists' playing of a hymn tune. The idea of measuring the former in decibels and the latter in hundredths of a second may seem laboriously inartistic. At least reveals an apparently spontaneous performance is humanly complex, summed up in the words of the psychologist Carl E. Seashore "that beauty in the rendition of a composer's design lies most frequently in the artistic play with deviations from the regular".

Considering the vastness of his subject, some of Dr Barnett's points seem disproportionately laboured and his terminology will depress a few English readers. Thus the individual's control of time intervals is illustrated by the union clapping of fans at a baseball game but under the general heading of "Innate Responses to Natural Sallience". Pianists, as opposed to aestheticians, will find the discussion of Matthay, Cortot and Schoenberg stimulating; the complete performer's task involves, and should seek to integrate, the muscular, emotional and structural approaches. The author's own experiments in musical analysis will cause many players to reconsider their

responsibilities in coming to grips with the nature and style of the individual work.

There are many musical examples, though on the subject of notation itself Dr Barnett has much to say. The finale of Brahms's D minor Piano Concerto opens with a single right-hand quaver, but the true interpreter sees it in its context: "What an extraordinary power to compress! By means of a single symbol, notation can bring into play a dozen processes having to do with tonality, harmony, meter, rhythmic pattern, counterpoint, form, texture, and instrumentation."

The experienced performer, of course, does not reason in this way. He grasps the significance of a note from his understanding of style. Are we however certain, after a lapse of time, exactly how composers intended their works to sound? Notation has its conventions and shortcomings, performing conditions have changed, and even the instruments themselves may have altered radically. To the purist who demands a return to a piano of Beethoven's own period, one may ask which piano and for which work? How far can ear-witness accounts of Beethoven's own playing be trusted? Should his trills begin on the main note or the note above, and can his pedalmarks be observed literally on a modern piano?

These and many other questions prompted Professor Newman's book, which he admits is only an introduction. To quote from his final paragraph:

We are thus brought back to our starting point, the real need for further, extensive and intensive studies into Beethoven performance practices, so that our knowledge can at least be brought up to the level represented by the parallel studies that do exist for Bach.

If this is true, which is debatable, the answer surely is that Bach, having been grossly over-edited and being still further removed in time, was in far greater need of restoration than Beethoven. Of all great composers Beethoven has proved the most immune to vagaries of fashion, and he notated his works meticulously.

Professor Newman at least sets us thinking that an Urtext edition is not enough to guarantee authenticity. We still need to read between and behind the lines, and it is a pity that the many interesting topics raised are not developed more fully. Not that any final conclusions could be reached. The art of performance still retains an intangible, unanalysable element, and a player of genius will reveal new facets of a composer's greatness even when he appears to break the rules. Professor Newman does less than justice to Schubert. Even the great names of the more distant past were unpredictable. According to Berlioz, Liszt completely revised his view of the first movement of the "Moonlight" Sonata between 1830 and 1837. Or did he succumb to the whim of the moment? That cannot be discounted, and it is held by some, composers included, to be the performer's prerogative.

## Violinist's creed

YERUHI MENDHINI:  
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The publisher's foreword aptly describes the *Theme and Variations* as an appreciation of Indian civilization, which runs to ten pages—this in addition to an informative paper on Indian music. A recurrent appreciation of the stability of Britain and its civilization is perhaps the more gratifying to his adopted countrymen because he is himself a cosmopolitan and widely travelled outside Europe. There are one or two chapters of autobiography, half a dozen short sketches of musicians, one being of his teacher Georges Enescu, but only two dealing with technical aspects of music. There are a dozen excellent portraits. Few excellent musicians of international repute have touched life at so many points and are able to write about them so persuasively.

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With the impact of philosophy on literature by I. G. Kidd we are back in the appalling shallows, and with "Theories of Literature and Taste" by D. A. Russell, clear and careful writer as he is, we are scarcely out of them, since these are subjects fitter for densely annotated volumes than for essays. Taste is silently and unwarrantably restricted to literary taste. But the very necessities of style tempt even scrupulous essayists on to thin ice. "As the creative age of classical poetry ended, that of prose began" is an epigram of obvious falsity; it has no attraction but that of a very old-fashioned received opinion. Were Aristophanes and Euripides not perhaps as young as Herodotus? Were Callimachus and Theocritus not creative? Was Iocrates, was even Plato, more creative than Herodotus? What makes a respectable scholar write such nonsense? The subjective conviction that he lives in an age of prose?

## Ultimate realities

R. T. WALLIS  
Neoplatonism  
212pp. Duckworth, £3.25.

Neoplatonism in its various forms was the dominant philosophy for the last three centuries of Antiquity, when it replaced earlier versions of Platonism and absorbed much of the teaching of Aristotle. Then and thereafter it played a crucial part in the formation of Christian thought, both Eastern and Western, and exerted a considerable influence on Islamic philosophy as well. Medieval Platonism and Aristotelianism were to a greater or lesser extent—how much is still debatable—coloured by Neoplatonic notions, transmitted as they so often were by men imbued with Neoplatonic ideas.

Yet in this country it is still an area almost unknown, regarded with amused if uninformed contempt by most historians of ancient philosophy and probably best known among students of Blake and Coleridge. Since Whittaker's *Neoplatonists*, which appeared in 1901, with a second edition enlarged but substantially unchanged in 1918, a good enough book at the time but now seriously outdated, there has been no comprehensive treatment of Neoplatonism in English apart from the contributions by several hands to the *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Thought*. Whittaker's book is outdated because, first on the Continent and more recently in England, there has been a revival of interest in Neoplatonism and much of the basic scholarly work is now being done for the first time. The first truly critical edition of Plotinus is not yet complete, that of Proclus's *Platonic Theology* has covered only the first of six books, and Damascius, the last head of the Academy and a figure of some importance, must still be read in an unsatisfactory nineteenth-century edition. The only complete work to have been equipped with a full commentary is Proclus's *Elements of Theology*. And within the past few years Porphyry and Iamblichus have begun to emerge as more than the minor figures that Whittaker not unreasonably judged them to be.

The current state of research means that R. T. Wallis's book must to some extent have the character of an interim report, at least in those parts of it which deal with post-Plotinian Neoplatonism; most of what he says on Plotinus is likely to be more permanent. Let it be said at the outset that *Neoplatonism* is a considerable achievement. While it is aimed at non-specialist readers, there is much in it that will be of value to

C. H. Roberts in an essay entitled "The Writing and Dissemination of Literature in the Classical World" rehearses clearly, efficiently and succinctly what is already sufficiently well known and easily available; but this treatment is better and fuller than most, and almost alone among all these 557 pages perfectly fulfils the requirements of a work of reference. C. E. Chaffin has contributed a study of Christian and pagan literary styles in Latin which fails to cut very deeply into its subject. The material is well known to the point of exhaustion but he does illuminate differences of theory and practice between Jerome and Augustine in a refreshingly simple way. Chaim Raphael writes on the Hebrew and Hellenic traditions; it will be seen that this and the previous essay have a gratuitous quality in a volume on "The Classical World": they have little to do with the rest of the volume but exist like some small university department in an outbuilding. Mr Raphael ranges very widely; his essay invokes Bowra, Arnold, Tynbee and Needham, with epigraphs from Empson and Trilling. In general his material is not new to theologians though it may be to classical scholars, but his method both intoxicates and bewilders; a more sober and empirical discussion would have been more useful in a volume like this. The

professionals as well; the author has scrupulously documented almost every statement and never failed, in so far as the restricted compass of the book allows, to present evidence against his own views.

The late Neoplatonists began their lectures on works of Plato and Aristotle by discussing the aims of the book to be expounded. Following in this tradition Professor Wallis has prefaced his own exposition with a discussion of the aims of Neoplatonism, which he classifies as metaphysical, exegetical and what he calls experiential, the last to do with the various methods of making contact with higher reality adopted from time to time—broadly speaking Plotinus aimed to achieve this by hard thinking, eventually, though far more rarely than Professor Wallis implies, crowned by mystic union; later Neoplatonists, after Porphyry, thought to achieve the same end by practices which were little better than magic. Professor Wallis perhaps makes these, technically known as theurgy, less prominent and less disreputable than they have often been taken to be: those who want to see what is involved should look at the notorious third chapter of Book Two of Iamblichus's *On the Mysteries*, now available in des Places's French translation. The difference was clearly perceived in ancient times by Olympiodorus.

One of the great merits of *Neoplatonism* is that, in spite of the pressures of space, Professor Wallis never attempts to impose consistency where it did not exist. This enables him to show how, just as some of Plotinus's views arise from ambiguities in Plato, whose teaching Plotinus and his successors merely claimed to be expounding, so some of the characteristic doctrines of later Neoplatonism may be seen as attempts to tidy up inconsistencies and difficulties left unresolved by Plotinus. Thus Plotinus's failure always to distinguish satisfactorily his second Hypothesis, Intellect, from his third, Soul, and even occasionally Intellect from the One, a tendency seen more clearly in Porphyry, coupled with difficulties about the nature of the One itself, led to the rigid structures of reality erected by Iamblichus and his successors.

One of the greatest difficulties in Plotinian Neoplatonism is how the One is related to the Others. Strictly it should not be so related at all, and later Neoplatonism, by the interposition of various intermediate entities, arranged that it was not, or at least not directly. At the same time Iamblichus and his followers demoted the highest part of the human soul from its place in the

final essay, "Retrospect", by D. Daiches, is better passed over in silence, since the reader who survived so far is unlikely to have much stomach for it, nor does anything to knowledge. There is a general lesson to be learnt from this mixed and what depressing volume. Interdisciplinary studies do not consist of mere co-existence of specialists, between the same walls or covered by the same roof, but of the ranging of individuals over a not properly mastered. It is impossible in a series of meetings to get scholars to contribute skills to answer a given series of questions or to break open the problem in different ways, but the solution must be fundamental before the stage of writing. Specialists will not all be concerned with historical or social context in the same way: this kind of consciousness has to be learnt in common. It was by the pupils of Mommsen, asked merely to perform, that senior scholars will sing an old song. Everyone equally wants perspectives and to open up subjects in a new way, but a trendy will in the editing is not enough. Publication of this kind is therefore positively harmful if it has not new to contribute, since it engenders fog and dullness to no purpose; it debases standards.

intelligible world, thus leaving a gulf between man and ultimate reality which could be bridged only by magical practices. In the eyes of some Iamblichus destroyed Neoplatonism as a reasonable philosophy as a reasonable philosophy. E. R. Dodds once wrote that "corrupted Plotinus" was introducing theosophical ideas from alien sources". But there is another side to Iamblichus. Professor Wallis, who seems a little too well disposed to this dubious figure, tries to reinstate him as a serious philosopher. He is undoubtedly, for so later Neoplatonists tell us, responsible for some of the innovations that we find in Proclus—Iamblichus's work is almost all lost—but Professor Wallis while admitting that one can always be certain what Iamblichus and what Proclus, seems inclined to give him credit for some of the basic philosophical positions of Athenian Neoplatonism. Proclus is correspondingly demoted and left with little more than some ends to tie up.

Having battled valiantly and successfully with Proclus's voluminous writings, Professor Wallis decides to leave Damascius until he has edited properly. His text is no worse than that of most of *Platonic Theology*, but should not begrudge Professor Wallis this relief. It would, however, have been better not to give the impression that the teaching of Plotinus at Athens ended abruptly with Justinian's edict of 529, and there is some evidence that it continued notwithstanding: such an edict of an imperial edict would not have been unique.

In a final chapter, which perhaps should be read first by those sceptical about the importance of Neoplatonism, Professor Wallis summarizes its influence on medieval and modern thought and literature, from Augustine to Averroes, Dante, Leibniz, Yeats and others. Goethe is a surprising addition from this chapter. But Professor Wallis also gives us a short history of Neoplatonic scholarship, the name of Clement, whose magnum opus, the *Stromata*, was a substantial contribution to the editorial work of Henry and Schwyzler. It is nothing that the second volume of their edition of the *Enneads* dedicated to him. Professor Wallis has produced an admirable and of a very difficult subject, readable for the erudition that lies behind it as well as for its lucidity and good sense.

## RELIGION

# Abbots in abundance

DAVID KNOWLES, C. N. L. BROOKE and VERA C. M. LONDON (editors)  
*The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, 940-1216* 277pp. Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Of all the debts which scholars owe to one another the deepest, the truest and the most insufficiently acknowledged is that which is due to the compilers of accurate books of reference. *The Heads of Religious Houses* is a work of this kind, and within its own field it is unlikely to be superseded. The idea of the book took shape as an offshoot of Dom David Knowles's masterly work on the religious orders in medieval England, and it has continued to grow, with the later help of C. N. L. Brooke and Vera London, from 1929 to the present day. In it are recorded the names of all the known heads of religious houses of men and women in England between the refounding of Glastonbury in the tenth century and the end of the reign of King John. In establishing these lists of names the compilers have drawn not only upon all the printed records of the period, but also upon a mass of unpublished material in the form of charters, martyrologies and other documents of a similar kind. In the case of each individual abbot or prior they have cited all known references. The result is a work which will be extremely valuable not only to ecclesiastical historians but also to anyone who is concerned with the establishment of precise dating in the records of the period.

The introduction should be made compulsory reading for anyone who intends to edit a medieval manuscript. It restores the balance, too often apt to be lost, between annals-

tic and record sources, and it indicates the pitfalls which lie in wait for that hopeful and inaccurate editor who does not take the trouble to check all his authorities. Forgers (some of them perfectly respectable people with the highest of motives) flourished in the twelfth century, and even where no forgery was intended, a combination of human error among monastic scribes, the imprecise terminology of some scriptoria and the sheer difference between medieval practice and that of our own time can combine to trap the unwary.

A study of the text prompts a whole series of questions. The almost complete change from English to Norman in the Christian names of the generation of abbots and priors who were in office at the end of William the Conqueror's reign is very marked, although we know from other sources (such as the *Registrum Antiquissimum* of the church of Lincoln) that this change was not reflected all through secular society. How far does this show a deliberate policy of extending Norman influence in the Church, and how far is it the result of lay patronage by aristocratic pious donors who enriched the houses? Or did names of Norman origin simply become fashionable among the kind of

parents whose children were likely to rise high in the service of the Rule? How far was the English Church influenced—if at all—by the steady succession of Frenchmen who seem to have ruled in the Cluniac and alien priories, in close dependency upon the mother-foundations across the Channel? Why did the abbots of Furness all enjoy so comparatively short a tenure of office? What happened to the delightfully-named "Mark the physician, a good priest", who never became prior of Montacute (perhaps he spent too much time attending to the needs of his spiritual and physical patients), and why was the Italian name Beatrice, borne apparently neither by a notable female saint nor by a distinguished lady of rank, so comparatively popular in twelfth-century England?

This book should find a place in all university libraries, and in the libraries of all serious students of medieval ecclesiastical history, next to Dom David Knowles's *Medieval Religious Houses*. It is to be hoped that the editors will continue the lists into the later Middle Ages, and, as in the thirteenth century the available contemporary material for this sort of work becomes much more plentiful, it may be that the next volume will take less than forty years to complete. But forty years is not too long to wait for a book such as this.

## Visible Christianity

MICHAEL RAMSEY  
*The Christian Priest Today* 100pp. SPCK. Paperback, 80p.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, as Primate of All England, possessing only a very limited authority outside his own diocese, has in some ill-defined sense come to be accepted as the head of the world-wide Anglican Church. Not only do letters asking for advice reach him from the most remote places, but it is taken for granted that he will travel everywhere and anywhere to attend conferences, to lecture or to preach. Other bishops, it is said, can and do neglect their reading, but he cannot, for at any moment he may have to speak or write not only about theology but about stum conditions in an English city or apartheid in South Africa. In the modern world it is impossible for him not to be on friendly terms with other Churches, their leaders and their problems. Following his predecessor's lead he has visited the Roman Pope, an occasion when he must have remembered that in a medieval wrangle he had a predecessor who was called "the Pope of the West".

All this bears directly on this book of a dozen addresses delivered to ordinands. Dr Ramsey always speaks to them as men sharing the life of a wider fellowship, something whose depth and extent they can only gradually realize, but something to which they belong and which, however unconsciously, supports them. Their problems are also the problems of the wider whole. Indifference, poverty, racial discrimination, indeed the whole range of human uncertainties, are to be found everywhere, as are the attempts, misguided or not, to adapt Christianity to the modern age. Sitting listening to him they must have been aware of the experience out of which he spoke, have seen him as a realist and not at all as an abstract theologian piously elaborating a theme.

Dr Ramsey constantly reminds us that the institution of the Church, from which so many young people clamour to be released, matters enormously. Christianity is not an intellectual exercise; but something that has come down to them from its beginning. The Church, with its life and worship is not simply a piece of history, but an inheritance which is itself the proof, as it is also the bearer of Christianity. He sees that ideas, religious or otherwise, inevitably express themselves in institutions, and he insists that the priest must see himself as the agent of the

Church, teaching its faith, guiding its sacramental worship, and being himself an expression of its life. This idea, that the priest is Christianity made visible, recurs again and again.

Dr Ramsey leaves his hearers in no doubt that, while he is thoroughly familiar with liberal theology, he can answer its objections and plainly see himself and his priests as the bearers of a real Gospel. He insists upon its historical validity, but he is equally clear about its saving grace—each is part of the long tradition which we inherit, and each must be evident in the priest's life and preaching. He does not want the priest to see himself as a defender of the Faith, but primarily as its declarer, a man convinced that when the Faith is fully preached it will do its own work, a work that cannot be measured by the numbers in a particular congregation.

Dr Ramsey speaks of the Eucharist as something in which everything else is gathered and made plain. There

the priest acts in Christ's name and in the name not only of the particular congregation but of the Holy Catholic Church down the ages. By his office as celebrant he symbolizes the focusing of the Eucharist in the givenness of the historic Gospel and the continuing life of the Church as rooted in the Gospel.

This and the following passage illustrate the depth of the Archbishop's theology and concern; he wants his priests to realize and to help the people to realize the Godward and the manward aspects of the liturgy. [The priest] will show them that it is more than their table-fellowship with one another, for it is their sharing in the worship of heaven with Blessed Mary and the Saints. He will show them that they are brought near to the awful reality of the Lord on Calvary as well as to his heavenly glory... the Christ upon whom they feed is one with the pulse of humanity around them.

These freely written addresses make up what is very much a book for our age, and the ease with which it can be read ought not to mislead anyone about the considerable depth of its thought.

*Philanthropy and Separatism* (Gregg International, £10.50) is a facsimile reprint of a collection of works by William Bradshaw, the Puritan controversialist. The works are *The unreasonable of the Separation of worship and ceremonies*, and *A mild and just defence of certain arguments*. R. C. Simmons supplies a brief introduction.

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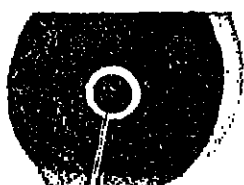
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## Legal fledglings

WILFRED R. PREST:

*The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts 1590-1640*  
263pp. Longman. £4.

"Nowadays", as Christopher Hill once remarked, "every self-respecting young historian is expected to have discovered an altogether new revolution before he reaches the age of 35." In this giddy progress, the "educational revolution" has been the latest. This notion of the "educational revolution" lies, like Cerebus, between Wilfred Prest and his real task of writing a detailed scholarly history of the actual working of the Inns and his attempts to find a suitable topic for the only blemish on an otherwise excellent book. He points out, very justly, that our lack of proper admissions records for the early sixteenth century makes it impossible to date or measure the supposed "influx of the gentry". He points out, too, that the relationship between admission and residence was by no means straightforward, and therefore that even complete admissions figures give us little guide to the actual population of the Inns. Having thus established his scholarly caution, Dr Prest then throws it away again by attempting to extrapolate from admission trends after 1560 to trends before 1560. Dr Prest is so clearly right that this is "an obviously speculative venture" that one is surprised that he undertook it, and even more surprised that he allowed the authors of his blurb to take it seriously.

Dr Prest is on sure ground as soon as he moves off this subject, and remains there for the rest of book. His discussion of the part played by gentlemen in the Inns is excellent, and his conclusion that the societies continued to function for the benefit

of their professional membership, leaving the young gentry as an "ornamental but essentially irrelevant appendage" is conclusively made out. Readers of Dr Prest's article in *Past and Present* may have expected this conclusion. The contents of the excellent article appear all the more convincing when developed in the context of a full history of the Inns, and especially of the tension between the Benchers and the junior members. The student's description of a moot which reads "I was there: had wine", is probably not misleading, and the remark that "in many respects law was the popular mind as economic life was enjoyed during the present century" grows more illuminating the longer one ponders it.

One of the pleasantest parts of the book is a fascinating little chapter on student rebellion in the Inns. In 1555, an attempt to ban beards at Lincoln's Inn was met with an attempt to secede and found a "free Inn", while attempts to ban ruffs, swords, and spurs were equally unsuccessful. As these disorders continued, people began to find ideological justification for them, and in 1639, the students at the Inner Temple claimed that their society was a mixed monarchy, in which the students had full powers of governance during Christmas. Dr Prest ascribes many of these disorders to "a basic ideological change around the middle of James I's reign, a general reaction against the whole scheme of values associated with Elizabethan Calvinism". Dr Prest has supported this hypothesis as strongly as a man working on one subject can do, and it should now be tested by others.

The final, and in many ways the most interesting, section of the book deals with religion, and with the various images the Inns have acquired. The Inns have had two

images, one as a riotous collection of fledgling Justices Shallows, the other as a place where "wrangling lawyers" and "Puritanism and sedition" were to be suppressed. The Inns, being very organized institutions, were not about the same mixture of oppositional attitudes as society at large. The Inns as "hotbeds" unless one accepts Laudian redefinition of subjects. Its appearance is similar not only from illustrations in books, but from the many surviving pieces displayed in museums and houses. Another type of luxury, which coexisted with the Inns, is largely forgotten. This is the leather, now rescued from obscurity by John Waterer, a quarter-century "in leather" association with the Museum of Aircraft in London have made a world authority on the subject.

While Spanish leather covers many common uses—such as in gaily higher than the equivalent proportion of members of the House of Commons. Has Dr Prest superseded his own quotation, that "a really good book on the Inns of Court has to be written"? Certainly, the written a really good book, which will be used as a work of reference by everyone interested in the Inns. But the Inns themselves, like educational institutions in general, are too formless and too unmanageable to provide a coherent picture. Dr Prest has therefore written the best book that can be written on the Inns, and a really good book on social and intellectual history of Tudor and Stuart England.

## A born subordinate

JOCK HASWELL:

*James II*  
323pp. Hamish Hamilton. £3.75.

That humourless, conceited and impatient monarch, King James II of England, has not had too many biographers, as he hardly makes an attractive subject. Naturally the enthusiastic Roman Catholic, Hilaire Belloc, wrote what there was to be said in his favour; but modern historians have relied on the life by F. C. Turner, published in 1948, which is eminently fair. Jock Haswell, his latest biographer, is a retired regular soldier and is naturally most interested in James as a general and admiral, though he admits that

James was not, by character, ability or practice, suited for supreme command, for he was of the type that although possessing intelligence, initiative and skill within a particular sphere, operates best when given directions from a superior.

For James's early campaigns with the French and Spanish armies Major Haswell has made use of the exceptionally boring memoirs which were written or at any rate dictated by James himself. A manuscript version of these in French was discovered in a chateau in the Midi in 1954 and subsequently conflated with James's *Life* written by the Rev J. S. Clarke in English at the behest of the Prince Regent in 1816. It appears to be well established that Marshal Turenne thought well of James, at any rate, as a subordinate. As James became a lieutenant-general in the French army when he was twenty and a High Admiral of Spain when he was twenty-six one would be safe in attributing his high ranks more to his royal blood than anything else.

The one naval battle in which he distinguished himself—Southwold Bay in 1665—would have redounded more to his credit if his Croom of the Bedchamber had not called off

the chase of the enemy squadron when his master was asleep. At the battle of the Boyne in 1690 James led his army from behind and away as quickly as possible when he was beaten; but by then James was getting near to sixty and preparing for warfare.

Major Haswell devotes only a fifth of his book to James's reign, which could no doubt do with further investigation; it is all clear why, after he had been ousted, James was welcomed as a hero and had a loyal party behind him. He was a man of few words, but four years of his reign as James II of Spain and as James I of Great Britain by the name of James II of Great Britain. Major Haswell is not fully aware of all the research that has been done on the reign, as, for example, in J. P. Kenyon's *History of the Second Earl of Southwold*. Though written in a readable and sensible way, this book has no sense superseded Turner's.

## The ex-Regent

ALAN PALMER:

*The Life and Times of George IV*  
224pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £2.65.

Books about George IV multiply, among them this one merits attention and praise. First, the choice of illustrations is inspired: while naturally some are familiar many are fresh and brilliantly funny. The picture research was done by Jane Dormer and her part in the book is insufficiently recognized by the publishers. The general editor, Antonia Fraser, should have alluded to the illustrations in her introduction, and she could have found space for this by dropping the facsimile of her signature which does not add to the elegance of the book.

Alan Palmer's text, which is serious but enjoyable, disentangles the King from much contemporary rubbish and—especially on the political side—has much to say that is helpful. He is understanding about the King's claim to have played a part in the overthrow of Napoleon. Had he not in 1811 and 1812 denied office to those who favoured a compromise peace and supported Wellington when "the dusty hills of Portugal seemed terribly distant from Paris"? He also makes a sound point in arguing that the vulgar force of the mob and Queen Caroline was a valuable safety-valve in diverting support from more dangerous and revolutionary causes. He is instructive on the lever of Hanover by which the King was able to

## Hides for hanging

JOHN W. WATERER:

*Spanish Leather*  
plus 80 plates. Faber and Grafton. £12.

Leather—even if it is often confused with a needlework—means something most of us. Readers of historical fiction have been conditioned for 200 years to picture the walls of medieval castles and Renaissance palaces as hung with "arabesque" tapestries, and the study of tapestry subjects. Its appearance is similar not only from illustrations in books, but from the many surviving pieces displayed in museums and houses. Another type of luxury, which coexisted with the Inns, is largely forgotten. This is the leather, now rescued from obscurity by John Waterer, a quarter-century "in leather" association with the Museum of Aircraft in London have made a world authority on the subject.

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John Waterer calls his hangings "leather". The name derives from a Libyan town already known in the ancient world for its tanned (alum-dressed) goatskins. A leather-manufacturing was developed in Cordoba with sheepskin as the basic material, during the Hispano-Moorish period. There is reason to think that leather was already used in Cordoba before the Moorish conquest, but Moorish crafts-people subsequently played an important part in the industry, and the surviving fragments of Spanish leather bear Moorish designs.

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Spanish or Cordoba, even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the industry in Spain had been eclipsed by offshoots in the Low Countries, and the "Spanish" leather in question might be Dutch or Flemish, proceeded by Dutch methods, and patterned with a Dutch design.

The earliest genuine Cordoba-made *guadameci* were plain white, or dyed red. Perhaps as early as the eighth or ninth century they were covered with gold or silver foil, a technique which may have been introduced to Spain by the Arab invaders. Later—Mr Waterer suggests the fourteenth century—painted, printed, and hand-punched designs were applied. In the fifteenth or sixteenth century hand-punching was superseded by patterning with pierced or engraved metal plates, and a further improvement involved the use of a screw-press in which heated metal plates embossed an all-over design.

The final and most splendid phase came in the seventeenth century, and outside Spain. "Spanish" leather production had now spread to several European centres, among which the Low Countries, where the industry was established in the Spanish Netherlands by Moorish immigrants before 1305, had become pre-eminent by 1600. Netherlands hangings of the seventeenth century were embossed with high-relief designs applied to the damped and silvered leather by wooden moulds and counter-moulds—Mr Waterer thinks that gingerbread moulds were sometimes used. Most of the surface was subsequently painted with the metallic ground colour left exposed here and there to highlight features of the design. Ironically, the "Spanish" leather best known today belongs to this last great period, in which the Low Countries were supreme.

Surviving pieces with this dating and provenance include leather coverlets, designed to be viewed from all four sides. A favourite theme was a swirling pattern of flowers, fruit, foliage, and garlands among which are disposed animals, birds, insects, and substantial cherubs.

## Pot philosophy

PHILIP RAWSON:

*Ceramics*  
211pp. Oxford University Press. £5.

Little enough has been written in English about the aesthetics of pottery. We have Lane's *Style in Pottery*, and parts of Honey's *The Art of the Potter*, and one may guess, for he gives no bibliography, that Philip Rawson knows both of these; but he goes far beyond the trail blazed by those two scholars. He is by profession a curator, like them, but he seems also to be a practising potter, a philosopher and an ethnologist.

Mr Rawson's book is divided into three parts, each of which contains a number of chapters. Something of its flavour may be perceived from a few chapter-headings: "The Existential Base", "Memory—Traces and Meaning", "Ceramics as Treasure", "Metaphor and Concept". Aesthetic study seems to generate opaque writing; his language lacks the elegance of Lane's and the felicity of Honey's, but he can still be vivid. In the first part ("General Considerations"), Mr Rawson has this to say about "Tactile Values": "Car bodies, stainless steel gadgetry, and especially television images all conspire, by a sort of sensuous castration, to destroy for us the whole realm of touch-experience", and he backs this with an illustration which must be the ultimate in ceramic tactile horror. And his experience of pots and his learning are as wide as can be wished: from Korea to Peru, and

from Neolithic times to today. He even shows us things made in India, that great desert on the ceramic map.

The basic originality of *Ceramics* is revealed in its third part, entitled Symbolism of Form. His message throughout is that the correct "reading" of a pot calls for our sharpest sensibilities, not only of eyes and fingers but also of intellect and imagination. Thus he writes about the "anti-intimate aristocratic distance" which shape, silhouette, bright colour, and very shiny glaze impart to Stoves of the late eighteenth century, "to be contemplated virtually as out of this world" (and has not Nancy Mitford recently reminded us that the courtiers referred to Versailles as a place apart, *ce pays-ci*?). This we can apprehend through our eyes. But Mr Rawson also would teach our hands to trace on a pot the gestures of the maker; he discusses the symbolism of different colours; and he explores and seeks to explain in philosophical terms the world-wide difference between East and West as revealed in the "curvature" of a pot's profile and the brush-strokes of its painter.

But for whom does Mr Rawson write, and who can obey his precepts? How many of us can acquire such a palate as his, nurtured on Homan bowls and Mochele portraits? We live in *ce pays-ci* and these things are indeed "Ceramics as Treasure", mute and enigmatic behind glass in museums. And of all the devotees of futilities and factory-marks, those worshippers in the outer temple, how many give thought to these arcana? This book is welcome indeed.



Above: Ah Puch, the death-god of the Maya pantheon.

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